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WHEN IS A THEFT NOT A THEFT?
RELIC THEFT AND THE CULT OF THE BUDDHA'S
RELICS IN SRI LANKA

KEVIN M. TRAINOR

Summary

This essay examines the phenomenon of relic theft in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition of Sri Lanka. Having noted the relative paucity of scholarship on this topic, the essay first examines the canonical warrant for the practice of relic veneration in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, and identifies a fundamental tension that the cult of veneration poses for the tradition. Relics, as valued material objects subject to human manipulation and possession, would appear to encourage attachment. The canonical passages that deal with the cult of veneration simultaneously affirm the value of the practice, while warning of the danger that attachment to the relics poses. The essay goes on to note evidence, in the form of expanded relic lists in canonical sources, of the expansion of the relic cult and of the need to affirm the authenticity of new centers of sacrality associated with the enshrinement of particular relics. The essay then examines several accounts of relic theft in the Pāli chronicle (*vamsa*) literature, noting that these accounts serve to simultaneously affirm the desirability of relics, and to account for the orderly movement of these valued objects from one location to another. Yet these accounts of relic theft are problematic in that they appear to endorse the practice of stealing, which is a violation of both lay and monastic Buddhist ideals. In response to this problem, the essay identifies two different models of relic theft, noting that one model is religiously affirmed, while the other is condemned. The essay concludes with a brief comparison of relic theft accounts in the Buddhist and Christian traditions.

The practice of venerating the physical remains of Christian holy men and women has drawn a wide range of interpretive responses, both from Christian theologians and from modern historians and scholars of religion.¹ Within this extensive body of scholarship, attention has recently been drawn to the phenomenon of relic theft as a sort of subset within the broad range of practices grouped together under the rubric of relic veneration. Patrick Geary, in his *Furta Sacra*, has contributed an illuminating analysis of relic theft and its religious significance in the Christian west from the ninth through the eleventh centuries.² As Geary's study aptly demonstrates, the relics of Christian saints gave rise to elaborate strategies of acquisition and authentication. For in the Christian

middle ages, to possess an authentic relic was to possess a locus of power the force of which could be felt simultaneously in the domains of princes and bishops, and in the court of heaven. As tangible objects that one could literally hold in one's possession, yet which were believed to provide access to heavenly power, relics served as the focus for a complex range of human behaviors, ranging from veneration to outright theft.

The phenomenon of relic veneration in the Buddhist tradition has not generated a comparable body of scholarly analysis.³ The reasons for this notable lacuna in Buddhist scholarship are undoubtedly multiple and complex. It surely derives in part from the distinctive ethos of the early western scholarship on Buddhism, beginning in the nineteenth century. The preoccupation with "original Buddhism," understood to be more a philosophy and ethical system than a religious cult, and the predominant attention devoted to the textual tradition, seem to have led many scholars to pass over the phenomenon of relic veneration. Witness, for example, the influential scholarship of T. W. Rhys Davids, founder of the Pāli Text Society, whose work, like that of other contemporary British writers on Buddhism, displays a distinct distaste for the devotional and cultic aspects of the Buddhist tradition, which he regarded as a degeneration from the Buddha's original teaching.⁴

It must also be acknowledged that the practice of relic veneration appears incongruous in the Buddhist tradition in a way that it does not in Christianity. Certain fundamental Christian teachings, such as the doctrine of the incarnation, the expectation of a bodily resurrection, and belief in the intercessory power of the saints in heaven, are all quite consonant with the practice of relic veneration. One might fairly ask, however, what legitimate place such a relic cult could have in the Buddhist tradition which has as its central insight the transience of human consciousness and corporeality. If the Buddha is the one who is revered by his followers precisely because he gained utter liberation from the cycle of rebirth, by what conceivable logic do his followers cling to his physical remains and make them the object of the highest veneration? Clearly an adequate response to this question lies beyond the limits of the present inquiry.⁵ Instead, I would like to examine in the pages that follow the more limited phenomenon of relic theft in an effort to illuminate

the complex religious logic of relic veneration in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

It should be borne in mind that we are not concerned here with the actual historical theft of relics, in contrast to Geary's *Furta Sacra* which catalogues the actual transfer of Christian relics.⁶ The theft of specific Buddhist relics may well have taken place, but the Theravāda sources provide us with little access to this sort of historical data.⁷ As we shall see, the Buddhist accounts of relic thefts involve the participation of non-human actors, and are accompanied by supra-mundane occurrences. They are charged with a mythic quality that serves to elevate them above the realm of conventional human interaction.⁸

For Theravāda Buddhists, the veneration of the Buddha's corporeal remains finds its most authoritative scriptural warrant in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, a text that provides a connected narrative of the Buddha's last weeks.⁹ The composite nature of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* is widely recognized, and various attempts have been made to separate out diverse strata in the text on the basis of a comparative study of the different textual traditions, supplemented by basic assumptions about the nature of "primitive" Buddhism and the evolution of Buddhist cultic life. Based on these criteria, André Bareau has argued that this passage represents a relatively late addition to the text's gradual development.¹⁰ Theravāda Buddhists, in contrast, have traditionally accepted this as the literal word of the Buddha,¹¹ and thus for them the practice of relic veneration has behind it the Buddha's direct injunction.

When the Buddha is asked what should be done with his body (*sarīraṃ*) after his death, he responds: " 'As, Ānanda, they treat the body of a Wheel-turning king (a *Cakravartin* or "universal monarch"), so should they treat the body of the Tathāgata.' " ¹² The Buddha then details the specific funerary rites appropriate both to Tathāgatas and *Cakravartins*, culminating in the construction of a relic monument (*thūpa*; Skt., *stūpa*) over the cremated remains. He concludes: " 'Those who there offer a garland, or scent, or unguent, or make a salutation, or feel serene joy in their heart, that will be to their benefit and well-being for a long time.' " ¹³

The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* goes on to describe the various acts of

homage accorded the body over a period of seven days, including music, dancing, hymns, offerings of garlands, perfumes, etc. The Buddha's corpse is elaborately wrapped in cloth and placed in an iron vessel filled with oil, in conformity with the Buddha's earlier instructions. The body is then cremated, and another week-long period of veneration follows. At this point, however, the text recounts a striking occurrence that clearly signals a fundamental tension in the relic cult.

The ceremonies up until this point have been conducted by the Malla people of Kusinara in whose region the Buddha died. When word spreads of the Buddha's death, seven of the clans from the surrounding territories send emissaries, each proclaiming their right to a share of the relics. The Mallas of Kusinara, in response, announce their intention to keep all the relics for themselves, on the grounds that the Buddha died in their territory. Though the text does not actually describe the various groups drawing up their armies in preparation for a battle, this image of an imminent armed conflict became deeply etched in the imaginations of later Buddhists, as we know from the bas-reliefs at Sāñcī depicting this scene.¹⁴ A major blood-bath is averted only by the intervention of a brahmin named Doṇa (Droṇa in Skt.) who proposes that the relics be divided into eight equal portions and distributed to the eight claimants. Calling to mind the Buddha's great forbearance, he points to the incongruity between the Buddha's teaching and the aggressive behavior of his followers. He declaims:

“Hear, sirs, but a single word from me;
 Our Buddha was a teacher of forbearance.
 Unfitting, indeed, is this clash of arms
 over the division of the remains of the one
 supreme among humans.
 May you all be united, sirs, reconciled;
 Rejoicing together, we shall make eight
 portions;
 Relic monuments will be wide-spread in [all]
 directions;
 The multitudes will feel serene joy toward the
 Vision-possessed One.”¹⁵

This episode lays bare a fundamental tension inherent in the Buddhist relic cult, even as it illuminates its appeal. Relics, as material objects that one can possess, fully engage the human capacity for attachment and manipulation. Therein lies part of their attraction. They provide access to religious power in a particular time and place, and, through their easy portability, facilitate the creation of new centers of sacrality. Yet there is something potentially disturbing about this in terms of the Buddhist ideal of nonattachment. Relics can be the objects of desire; they encourage the human tendency to cling. What is striking about this passage is the way in which it invokes the Buddhist ideal of forbearance and nonattachment, even as it affirms a religious practice that appears to encourage a kind of acquisitiveness. The episode serves to instruct the faithful that the Buddha's relics are worthy of veneration, even as it vividly demonstrates the potential threat that the practice represents to the tradition's fundamental religious ideals.

The appeal of relics as objects of religious devotion is further complicated by the fact that the physical appearance of a corporeal relic does not unequivocally distinguish it from the corporeal remains of those unworthy of veneration.¹⁶ In order for a relic to be regarded as authentic, there is need for some means of linking it back through time and space to the person of the Buddha, for it is the physical connectedness of the relics with him that renders them powerful and worthy of veneration. The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* establishes this historical link with a vivid account of the cremation and a description of the division of the relics into eight equal portions, each of which goes to one of the eight clans. When representatives of another clan arrive after the distribution has been completed, they are given the cinders from the funeral pyre. Finally, Doṇa takes the vessel used to measure the relics, resulting in a tenfold distribution.¹⁷ The recipients, we are told, go to their respective lands and enshrine the relics in *thūpas*, marking out in a tangible fashion the region in which the Buddha taught and his Dhamma was established. This account of the initial enshrinement constitutes an authoritative model for the later expansion of the Buddha's teaching in conjunction with the dispersion of his corporeal remains.¹⁸

The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* concludes with two different lists of

relics. The first list accounts for the initial ten enshrinements.¹⁹ The second list, which the fifth-century CE commentator Buddhaghosa notes was added by the elders in Sri Lanka (*Tambapaṇṇi-therehi vuttā*), provides an update, specifying that seven of the eight portions remain in India and one has moved to Rāmagāma where it is worshipped by the kings of the serpent-deities (*nāga-rājas*). In addition, the locations of the Buddha's four eye-teeth are specified:

“One eye-tooth is worshipped in the Tāvatiṃsa
 heaven,
 one is honored in Gandhāra's city as well,
 One more in the realm of the Kāliṅga king,
 still another the serpent-kings honor.
 Through their radiance this wealth-bearing
 earth is adorned with noblest offerings.
 Thus are the relics of the Vision-possessed One
 well-honored by those who are honored;
 He is worshipped thus by humankind's noblest-
 by god-king, serpent-king, human-king.
 Revere him with hands clasped before you;
 hard to meet indeed, through hundreds of
 eons, is a Buddha.”²⁰

These two relic lists bear witness to an expanding textual tradition that has recorded and thereby authenticated the dispersion of relics as new devotional centers have arisen claiming to possess relics of the Buddha.²¹ Thus the second list includes a reference to the Buddha's four eye-teeth which go unmentioned in the preceding account of the distribution.²² By the time of Buddhaghosa in the fifth century, it is clear that nearly every Buddhist monastery had its *thūpa* enshrining relics.²³ There was thus a growing demand for new relics with some claim to authenticity.

The *Buddhavaṃsa* (“Chronicle of Buddhas”), one of the last texts to be added to the Theravāda canon, provides additional evidence of this tendency to produce more extensive lists detailing previously unmentioned relics.²⁴ The relics recorded in a series of verses include not only corporeal relics, but also “relics of use” (*pāribhogika-dhātū*), i.e., objects used by the Buddha during his lifetime.²⁵ The *pāribhogika* relics noted here include the Buddha's robes, his alms bowl, walking staff, bed-covering, drinking vessel,

belt, bathing cloth, sitting mat, coverlet, fire-stick, water-strainer, razor, and needlecase.²⁶

The close connection between the dissemination of the Buddha's teaching and the widening distribution of his relics comes through clearly in the *Mahāvamsa* ("Great Chronicle") account of the coming of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. According to the traditions preserved in Sri Lanka's extensive chronicle literature, beginning with the fourth- or fifth-century *Dīpavamsa* ("Chronicle of the Island"), the Buddha's teaching was brought there by the emperor Aśoka's son, Mahinda, in the third century BCE.²⁷ This tradition received its authoritative form in the *Mahāvamsa*, dating perhaps a century later than the *Dīpavamsa*.²⁸ The text recounts Mahinda's conversion of the Sri Lankan king Devānaṃpiyatissa through the preaching of the Buddha's Dhamma, and the establishment of the boundaries (*sīmā*) defining the monastic community's ritual space in which the rite of higher ordination is performed. These constitute two of the three foundations of the Buddhist tradition summarized in the formula of the Triple Gem.²⁹ However, the first component, the Buddha, had yet to be established for the sake of the human community on the island.³⁰

According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Mahinda made this deficiency known to the king in the following words: "O great king, it has been a long time since we saw our Teacher, the Fully-enlightened One; we have dwelt without a refuge; there is nothing here for us to worship." ³¹ The king, confused by the monk's words, replied: "But did you not tell me, sir, that the Fully-enlightened One is passed away?" ³² Mahinda's response leaves no doubt as to the essential equivalence between the living Buddha and his corporeal remains: "When the relics are seen, the Conqueror [i.e., the Buddha] is seen." ³³ An account follows of the acquisition of several relics of the Buddha from the emperor Aśoka and from the great god Sakka, including the Buddha's alms bowl and his right collarbone (*dakḥiṇakkhakaṃ*). King Devānaṃpiyatissa enshrines these with great pomp on the site of the present-day Thūpārāma relic monument in the ruins of the ancient city of Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka. With this enshrinement, the Buddha's living presence as an object of devotion and offering is ritually effected, and the Triple Gem is fully represented on the island.

As we shall see, however, accounting for the movement of a well-known relic from one place to another constitutes something of a problem. Why should an object of such great religious power and desirability be handed over voluntarily to those who seek to establish it in a new locality?³⁴ It is this basic conundrum that the relic theft accounts serve to resolve.

Our first theft account comes from Buddhaghosa's fifth-century CE commentary on the passage from the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* describing the division of the Buddha's relics following his cremation.³⁵ The brahmin Doṇa, who is depicted in the canonical account as a figure of considerable authority, appears in the commentary as something of a conniver. The commentary tells us that before dividing up the relics, he shows them to the assembled faithful, and they are overcome with sadness and lamentation upon seeing the sorry state to which their Master has been reduced. While they are distracted by their grief, Doṇa seizes the right eye-tooth of the Buddha and hides it inside his turban. At this point, the commentary tells us, Sakka (Skt. Śakra), king of the gods, intervenes. Concerned that Doṇa will be unable to provide suitable worship for the precious relic, he steals the eye-tooth from him and takes it up into the Tāvātimsa heaven where he enshrines it in the Cūlāmaṇi-cetiya, a magnificent relic monument constructed over hair relics of the Buddha obtained at the time of his Great Renunciation (*mahābhikkhamāṇa*).

The commentary goes on to describe how Doṇa, having handed out the eight shares, discovers that the eye-tooth is missing, but is unable to complain of its theft because he himself had stolen it.³⁶ At the same time, it is too late for him to request a share of the other relics, so he asks for the measuring vessel which also has "the character of a relic" (*dhātu-gatiko*) so that he can erect a relic monument (*thūpa*) over it and celebrate a festival (*maham*).³⁷

This episode is noteworthy in several respects. First of all, we see the intervention of a superhuman figure who acts to ensure that the relic is enshrined in a place where it will receive proper veneration, a theme that occurs repeatedly in the Buddhist relic theft accounts, as we shall see.³⁸ In this instance Doṇa's theft is countered by Sakka's theft in order to prevent the relic from being dishonored. Furthermore, the episode serves to underscore the great desirability

of the relic, even as it provides an authoritative account of the relic's movement from the site of the Buddha's cremation to the Cūḷāmaṇi-cetiya.

At the same time, however, such an account would seem to introduce its own complications. The removal of a relic against the wishes of its possessor, whether by force or through trickery, is a dubious action, one that we would expect to fall into the Buddhist ethical category of "taking what is not given" (*adinnādāna*). The second of the Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*), which constitute the basic moral obligations of a lay Buddhist, specifically enjoins against theft. Furthermore, the *Vinaya* code of disciplinary rules which governs the lives of the members of the saṅgha includes a group of four *parājika* ("characterized by defeat") actions which constitute grounds for immediate expulsion from the order, and theft is the second of these.³⁹ In light of the consistent condemnation of theft in Buddhist teachings, how can the theft of a relic be justified?

In an effort to frame an adequate response to this question, let us turn now to a closer examination of two relic-theft accounts in the Pāli chronicle literature. They are found in two late Pāli chronicles which share a common structure and subject matter—they narrate the histories of two significant relics from the time of the Buddha's cremation to their enshrinement by great kings in Sri Lanka. The *Thūpavaṃsa* ("Chronicle of the Thūpas"), which dates to the thirteenth century CE, relates the history of one full measure of the original eight measures of relics apportioned by Doṇa following the Buddha's cremation.⁴⁰ The *Dhātuvāṃsa* ("Chronicle of the Relics"), probably dating from the early fourteenth century, describes the peregrinations of the Buddha's forehead-bone.⁴¹

Both the *Thūpavaṃsa* and the *Dhātuvāṃsa* place the history of their respective relics in the broader context of the history of the Buddhist *sāsana*. The *Thūpavaṃsa* begins with an account of the Buddha receiving a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of his future enlightenment at the feet of the Buddha Dipaṅkara, the first of a succession of twenty-four Buddhas who preceded Gotama's enlightenment. The chronicle provides accounts of each of these Buddhas' relics and the *thūpas* built to enshrine them. A kind of "salvation history" is thus recounted, stretching from the *thūpa* of the very first Buddha countless eons in the past, to the particular *thūpa* upon which the

chronicle is focused, the Mahāthūpa in the ancient city of Anurādhapura, built by King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī in the second century BCE. This account of the succession of relics operates within the framework of a series of vows and predictions which serve to create a sense of intentionality and inevitability to the historical vicissitudes that the relic encounters en route to its enshrinement in the Mahāthūpa. As a result, a seemingly haphazard and even ostensibly illicit transfer of a relic from one site to another appears to conform to the Buddha's explicit intention. This is evident in the charge given to the monk chosen to acquire the relic: “ ‘Friend Soṇuttara, the Tathāgata as he lay in his death-bed addressed Sakka, the king of the deities, and told him, “Out of my bodily relics amounting to eight measures, one measure, having been honored by the Koliya princes, will in the future be established in the Great Cetiya in the Island of Sri Lanka.” ’ ’⁴²

In an analogous fashion, the *Dhātuvamsa* begins by placing the history of its relic, the forehead-bone relic of the Buddha, in the larger context of the Buddha's three mythical visits to the island of Sri Lanka during his lifetime, and then turns to a description of the Buddha's death and the distribution of his relics. The chronicle provides a continuous account of the relic's history, beginning with its inclusion in the share of relics that went to the Koliyas at the time of the Buddha's cremation, the subsequent acquisition of the relic by the Buddha's disciple Mahākassapa, and the continuous handing down of the relic from monk to monk and from king to king until the time of King Kākavaṇṇatissa who was destined to enshrine it in Sri Lanka in the second century BCE. As in the case of the Mahāthūpa relic, the forehead-bone relic is the subject of a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) by the Buddha. King Goṭhābhaya, lying on his death-bed, summons his son, Prince Kākavaṇṇatissa, and says: “ ‘Dear Tissa, this forehead-bone relic has come to use by a succession (*paramparāya*). The Teacher, while yet alive, made a prediction (*vyākaraṇamākāsi*), saying: “You surely shall take and enshrine this relic on the bank of the great river, on the side of Lake Seru, on top of the tank named Varāha, and you shall build a residence for the saṅgha.” Therefore, after my death, take this relic and enshrine it in that place.’ ”⁴³ Once again the relic's movement from India to eastern Sri Lanka is portrayed as being in conformity with the Buddha's expressed intention.

It is within this overarching setting of intentionality that the theft of relics for the Mahāthūpa takes place, as described in the *Thūpavamsa*. The chronicle recounts how the relics came into the possession of Mahākāla, king of the serpent-deities (*nāgas*) in the Mañjerika *nāga*-abode. Initially enshrined at Rāmagāma on the bank of the Ganges following the great division of relics overseen by Doṇa, they were later washed out to sea in a great flood. There they were rescued by the *nāga*-king and enshrined in great splendor in his kingdom where the *nāgas* worshipped them with lavish offerings.

The figure of the *nāga* is a complex one in the Buddhist tradition, a reflection of the rich Indian mythological tradition centered on the serpent.⁴⁴ There are numerous references in the canon, as well as later Buddhist literature, to the Buddha's interaction with these figures, and several Jātaka stories center on the Buddha's past lives in which he was reborn as a *nāga*.⁴⁵ In general, *nāgas* are powerful beings who dwell under the earth, in the mountains, and in bodies of water. Clearly connected with rain and the forces of fertility, they are also depicted as the guardians of jewels and treasure. Their relationship to the Buddha is characterized by subservient devotion, and there are several accounts of how particular *nāgas* were subdued and converted by the Buddha.⁴⁶ Because of their associations with fertility and the power of sexuality, the *nāgas* symbolize the forces of desire and rebirth that the Buddha has overcome through his Enlightenment. The *nāgas* are thus ambivalent figures in the Buddhist mythology, though they are frequently depicted as the Buddha's devoted followers once their potentially chaotic powers have been brought under the guidance of the Buddha's teaching.⁴⁷ As we shall see below, however, the *nāgas* suffer from the disadvantage of their non-human status; despite their extraordinary powers, they cannot gain insight and ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth. This limitation plays a significant role in the Buddhist relic theft accounts, to which we now return.⁴⁸

When the time comes for the enshrinement of the relics in the Mahāthūpa, the monks select a young monk named Soṇuttara to obtain the relics from King Mahākāla.⁴⁹ Soṇuttara, despite the fact that he is only a sixteen-year-old novice, possesses the "sixfold higher knowledge" (*chaḷabhiññam*).⁵⁰ The sixth of these higher

knowledges is synonymous with the attainment of enlightenment. Soṇuttara possesses supra-normal psychic powers (*iddhis*), as well, and these figure prominently in his efforts to acquire the relics. While the *Thūpavaṃsa* account provides us with no background on Soṇuttara's past, the *Mahāvāṃsa* tells of an incident in one of his past lives that prepared him for this mission.

According to the *Mahāvāṃsa*, Soṇuttara was a brahmin named Nanduttara during the time of the Buddha, and he made lavish offerings to the saṅgha at a ford on the Ganges called Payāga (present-day Allahābād). At one point a monk named Bhaddaji, who has attained the sixfold higher knowledge, performs a great marvel by means of his supra-normal psychic powers. He goes up into the Brahma-world and seizes a *thūpa* enshrining the Buddha's clothing from the time of his Great Renunciation; he displays this massive relic monument on his outstretched hand to the monks and laity, including Nanduttara, and then returns it to its celestial home. He also causes a massive palace submerged in the river to rise up into the air. Nanduttara, inspired by these great marvels of psychic power, makes a solemn aspiration (*paṭthanā*) in the Buddha's presence. He vows: “ ‘May I be able to bring back relics attached to others’ ” (*parāyattam aham dhātuṃ pahū ānayitum siyam*).⁵¹ The commentary on this passage adds that the Buddha, having heard his aspiration, made the following prediction (*byākaraṇam akāsi*): “ ‘You, Nanda, when I have passed away completely in the future, shall acquire and hand over a measure of my corporeal relics from the *nāga*-realm, which have gone into the hands of others, for [enshrinement in] the Mahāthūpa which will be built by a king named Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.’ ”⁵² It notes, as well, that these are the same relics that the Buddha appointed for enshrining in the Mahāthūpa while he was lying on his death-bed.

This story is of significance for our inquiry in that it suggests that a formal category of acquiring relics “attached to others” (*parāyattam*) or “gone into the hands of others” (*parahatthagatam*) was recognized by Sri Lankan Buddhists at least by the time of the *Mahāvāṃsa* (c. fifth-sixth century CE), and that such an action was regarded as something that an arahant might undertake. Indeed, this story of Soṇuttara's vow in a past life makes the Buddha himself the authority for such an undertaking.

The *Thūpavaṃsa* goes on to describe Soṇuttara's encounter with Mahākāḷa, the *nāga*-king, and the king's efforts to retain possession of the relics by means of deception. The *nāga*-king experiences great distress when he hears of the young monk's mission and thinks, " 'We had thought that by honoring these relics we would be saved from a woeful state and be reborn in heaven, but this monk is of great psychic and supernatural power; should these relics remain (any longer) in this place he would be capable of even overpowering us and seizing them.' " ⁵³ He then signals his nephew, Vāsuladatta, to remove the relics from the relic monument. Vāsuladatta hides the relics by swallowing them in their golden casket, and goes off to wait at the foot of Mt. Sineru. Once the relics have been removed, the king can then make the claim that the relics are not in his possession. When the monk repeats his request for the relics, Mahākāḷa takes him to see the magnificent relic monument in hopes of placating him. A verbal joust ensues between the two protagonists, one that raises fundamental questions about the proper way to worship relics and the religious goals that motivate that worship.

The *nāga*-king points to the exceptional splendor of the relic monument, and the monk acknowledges that all the treasures in the island of Sri Lanka cannot match even the beautiful doorstep before the entrance to the great structure housing the monument in the *nāga*-abode. The *nāga*-king then challenges the monk: " 'If that be so, O monk, is the removal of relics from a place of high honor to a place of less honor not improper?' " ⁵⁴ It should be recalled here that the relics are accorded the same status as the Buddha himself, and thus to accord the relics less honor is effectively to dishonor the Buddha. ⁵⁵ The monk's response points to the ultimate motivation behind the practice of relic veneration—the realization of the Buddha's teaching and the absolute cessation of suffering. He notes that Buddhas are more concerned with the Dhamma than with material benefits, and that *nāgas*, by virtue of their non-human status, are incapable of gaining insight into this Dhamma and thereby attaining liberation from suffering. He concludes with these verses:

"None of you, O *nāga*, has realized the truth;
Surely it is proper to bring the relics to a place
where the truth is realized.

Tathāgatas are born for liberation from
 saṃsāra's suffering;
 This was the Buddha's intent; therefore we shall
 take the relics."⁵⁶

The text clearly attributes both intentionality and a certain inevitability to the movement of the relics from the realm of the *nāgas* to the island of Sri Lanka. By claiming that the Buddha intended that his relics be enshrined in the Mahāthūpa, and that he furthermore predicted that Soṇuttara would move them, an act of theft is effectively stripped of its arbitrary and illicit character, and is transformed into an action that conforms to the Buddha's word. Soṇuttara's solemn aspiration, combined with the Buddha's prediction, serve the important function of providing a mechanism for accomplishing the Buddha's beneficent intention after he has passed away. As a result, even though the Buddha is not consciously present in his relics, the relics continue to be governed according to his will.⁵⁷

An analogous case appears in the post-canonical *Milindapañha* text ("Questions of [King] Milinda") where belief in the power of a solemn resolution serves to explain how marvels can occur at monuments enshrining the relics of arahants.⁵⁸ When the monk Nāgasena is asked to explain under what circumstances a marvel (*pāṭihīra*) occurs at a relic monument, he states that it takes place after the final passing away of an arahant by virtue of a resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) made while that person was still alive. One can see the tradition seeking to account for the continued powerful presence of the Buddha or the arahants in their relics without implying that they somehow continue to live on in those relics. It is clear that the relics of the Buddha are treated as though he is still present in some sense, as indicated by Mahinda's statement that seeing the Buddha's relics is equivalent to seeing the Buddha himself. This identification between the Buddha while alive and his relics after his passing away is reinforced in the *Thūpavaṃsa* by the account of his relics repeating a great marvel that the Buddha performed during his lifetime, and by a description of the relics taking on his physical appearance at the time that he lay on his death-bed.⁵⁹

An exploration of the complexities of this equivalence requires a

lengthier treatment than is possible within the limits of this article. It is illuminating to note, however, that it is popularly believed in Sri Lanka today that the relics of the Buddha and the arahants have the power of self-locomotion, and that relics will disappear if they are not accorded proper veneration. Since relics have a will of their own, it could be argued that it is impossible to steal relics if they don't want to be stolen. While this is never directly stated in the tradition, the association of vows and predictions that we have discussed above clearly bears some analogy to this notion that relics possess a continuing power to accomplish the will of those whose remains they are.⁶⁰

Returning to the *Thūpavaṃsa* account, we find the *nāga*-king continuing to put off Soṇuttara's requests for the relics. Safe in his knowledge that the relics have been removed from the monument, Mahākāla tells the monk that he can take the relics with him if he can find them. Lest there be any doubt as to the king's permission, the monk receives this assurance in a ritualized threefold repetition.⁶¹ Of course Soṇuttara can see the relics, and he uses his supra-normal psychic power to fashion a long, slender arm with which he reaches down the throat of the king's nephew and removes the reliquary. The monk then returns to the monastery for the relic enshrinement, and the *nāgas* are left behind lamenting their great loss. The account of the incident does not end here, however. The *nāgas* go before the community of monks and plead their case, saying, " 'You prevent us from [gaining] heaven and liberation' " (*amhākaṃ saggamokkhanatarāyaṃ karotha*).⁶² The monks, moved by compassion, give back a small portion of the relics so that the *nāgas* can continue to venerate them, thus providing them with an appropriate object for their devotion as they strive earnestly along the path to the state of ultimate liberation which can only be realized while in a human birth.

We find a very similar account of a relic theft in the *Dhātuvaṃsa*, which evidently draws upon the *Thūpavaṃsa* itself or upon traditions that lie behind it. The basic structure of the confrontation is exactly parallel, though the identities of the relic and the protagonists have changed. In this case the relic in question is a hair relic given by the Buddha to the two merchants Tapussa and Bhallika, his first lay disciples. According to the *Dhātuvaṃsa*, the two merchants became

negligent in their worship of the relics, and a *nāga*-king named Jayasena carried them off and enshrined them in his palace.⁶³ A monk named Siva is sent by the saṅgha to obtain the relics for their enshrinement in Sri Lanka. He, like Sōṇuttara, possesses the six-fold higher knowledge and is a master of supra-normal psychic powers. In this case, however, the *nāga*-king sees the monk coming and immediately recognizes his intention to take the relics.⁶⁴ According to this account, the king himself swallows the relics and, when the monk requests that they be handed over, he denies that he has them. As in the previous account, the monk is told three times that he can take the relics if he can see them. The monk again retrieves the reliquary by means of his psychic powers, and returns to the monastery for the enshrinement. In this version, however, the *nāgas* decide to follow the monk in order to recover the relics by force. Testifying to their great loss, they compare the monk to “one who plucked out our eyes and fled.”⁶⁵ Failing in their efforts to capture him, the *nāgas* go before the Sri Lankan king and accuse the monk of theft.⁶⁶ The king asks the monk if the charge is true, but the monk denies it, claiming that the relic was voluntarily given to him by the *nāga*-king. When the *nāga*-king challenges the monk to bring testimony in support of his claim, the monk calls upon the *nāga*-king’s nephew who corroborates the monk’s story.

The variations in this second account, though seemingly minor, are nonetheless significant. We find the *nāgas* chasing after the monk in an effort to overpower him, a vivid testimony to the relic’s great value and of their attachment to it. We also find the charge of theft explicitly stated—the monk is accused of “taking what is not given.” Once again, the innocence of the monk appears to hinge on the *nāga*-king’s three-fold affirmation that the monk is free to take the relic if he can see it. In this latter instance, however, the *nāga*-king is clearly seen to be lying when he says that he does not have the relic, since he himself has swallowed it. On the whole, the *nāga*-king is much less sympathetically portrayed in the second version of the story. The story ends with him standing outside the area of the relic monument, overcome with suffering. His nephew, in contrast, is invited to sit near the relic monument, and he and his fellow *nāgas* take up the responsibility of standing guard over the relic.⁶⁷

We find the *Dhātuvamsa* elaborating upon the *Thūḥpavamsa* account of a relic theft in another episode. We noted above the account of Doṇa's theft of the eye-tooth relic and its subsequent theft by the god Sakka. The *Dhātuvamsa* expands upon this scene, charging Doṇa with additional acts of larceny.⁶⁸ According to this version, Doṇa hid a second eye-tooth between his toes, and a third inside his clothing. The second one is subsequently stolen by the *nāga*-king Jayasena who enshrines it in his realm, and the third is taken by an unnamed resident of Gandhāra who, seizing it "with good intent,"⁶⁹ takes it back to Gandhāra and enshrines it.

Doṇa's actions are further embellished later on in the text. He is pictured writhing about on his back in misery because he has lost all three of his stolen relics.⁷⁰ Sakka sees this and resolves to dispel his grief. Disguising himself as a *vīṇā* teacher, he goes to Doṇa's side and preaches a Jātaka tale containing the line, "an extremely greedy man is wicked" (*atīlabho puriso pāpako hotīti*). Hearing this, Doṇa thinks, " 'This *vīṇā* teacher knew of my theft.' " ⁷¹ Through the preaching of this Jātaka story, Doṇa comes to recognize the greedy motivation that underlay his efforts to steal the relics, and he realizes, as well, the negative consequences that inevitably follow such thoughts and actions. His grief is dispelled and he takes the vessel used to divide the relics as an appropriate object for expressing his devotion to the Buddha.

In this instance, Doṇa's acts are explicitly condemned for their greedy motivation. Clearly, the question of intentionality is central to the issue of what constitutes relic theft. Buddhaghosa, explicating the word "theft" (*adinnādāna*) in one of his commentaries on the *Abhidhamma* literature, details five criteria for judging whether or not a particular act constitutes theft.⁷² First of all, the object must be another's property; second, the alleged thief must know that it belongs to another; third, there must be conscious intent to steal it; fourth, there must be an effort made to steal it; and, finally, the object must be actually taken away. As I noted before, the act of theft by a monk is one of the four acts which constitute the basis for immediate expulsion from the monastic community.

In the section of the *Vinaya* that deals with this offense, there are several accounts of incidents from the time of the Buddha that formed the basis for the specific prohibitions spelled out in the text.

It is again clear from these cases that the intention behind the action is of crucial significance in determining whether or not a theft has been committed. For example, a monk who sees a monk's robe blowing by and seizes it in order to return it to its proper owner is not guilty of theft.⁷³ In another case, a monk who, out of compassion, releases a pig trapped in a hunter's snare, is judged innocent of stealing.⁷⁴ Likewise, the Buddha exonerates a monk who uses his supra-normal psychic power to return two children who have been kidnapped by thieves.⁷⁵

Seen in the light of these examples, the cases that we have been considering do not uniformly fall under the category of theft. In each case it is clear that the relics are being removed against the will of the individual who is in at least temporary possession of them. But the intention behind the removal is, in some cases, clearly motivated by the desire to make the relics accessible to other individuals who can benefit from their presence. Seen from this point of view, Doṇa's efforts to hide the Buddha's eye-teeth during the relic distribution constitute theft because he is motivated by a selfish concern for himself alone.

The actions of the monks Soṇuttara and Siva, on the other hand, fall into a different category for a number of reasons. To begin with, both of them are carrying out the explicit instructions of the community of monks. In Soṇuttara's case, his action is also in conformity with a prediction of the Buddha received in a past life. In both cases, the action of acquiring the relics is necessary for the enshrinement of the relics as ordained by the Buddha during his lifetime, and the monks who undertake the theft appear to be free of any selfish motivation. It should be recognized in this regard that both Soṇuttara and Siva are arahants, individuals who are categorically incapable of selfish attachment. Their actions appear to be motivated by compassion for others. It is no doubt true that this comes at the expense of the *nāgas* who lose possession of relics that had brought them the opportunity for accumulating great merit. But their deep attachment to the relics as manifested in their duplicity and aggressive behavior serves to highlight the potential for attachment that is inherent in the practice of relic veneration.

We thus find these Buddhist relic theft accounts encoded with a complex set of messages. On the one hand, the Pāli chronicles serve

to emphasize the intrinsic desirability of the Buddha's relics. They function, as well, as guarantors of authenticity, providing a detailed history of a particular relic from the time of the Buddha's cremation to the enshrinement of that relic in Sri Lanka, buttressed by a litany of vows and predictions which provide an aura of ordered and inevitable movement. On the other hand, the accounts also serve to warn of the potential for misuse. The negative portrayals of Doṇa and the *nāgas* vividly demonstrate what happens when relics become objects of attachment and desire. Whatever one might conclude about the appropriateness of relic veneration in terms of the Buddhist ideal of nonattachment, it is apparent from these relic theft accounts that the practice of relic veneration has been incorporated into the Theravāda tradition in such a way as to reinforce the overarching goal of mental detachment. It is precisely this ideal of nonattachment that makes it possible to affirm, under the proper circumstances, that "a relic theft is not a theft."⁷⁶

Returning to compare briefly these Buddhist accounts with the accounts of Christian relic theft presented by Geary, I would make the following observations. In both the Buddhist and Christian settings, the relic functions as a tangible point of access between the personal sanctity of the person with whom it bears a physical connection and the community of those who turn to that person for support. As such, the relic makes possible a point of continuity between the saint/arahant and the community of his or her followers.

It should be noted, however, that the character of this continuity differs somewhat in the two cases. Because the Christian saint is envisioned to be alive and well in the court of heaven, the idea of a continued interchange between the saint above and the faithful on earth presents no conceptual difficulties. Thus, as Geary notes, the relic is perceived to have volition, and the successful theft of a relic can be deemed to be the will of the saint if the relic receives proper veneration as a result of the translation.

The phenomenon of theft in the Buddhist tradition manifests a somewhat different character, however, in keeping with the basic teaching that the Buddha and the arahant should no longer be regarded as existing (or as not existing). We thus find recourse to the notion of vows, predictions, and the doctrine of karma to

account for the relic's active presence in the midst of the community. One might say that in the Christian setting, the relic bridges a spatial chasm (between heaven and earth), while in the Buddhist context, it overcomes a temporal disjunction (the Buddha before his final passing away, and the Buddhist community of the present). It is thus not surprising to find, as Geary notes, that a dominant theme in the Christian accounts is the active and powerful volition of the relic.⁷⁷ This power may be manifested for both good and ill, depending upon the will of the saint and the moral character of the thief.⁷⁸ In the Buddhist theft accounts, however, one finds no suggestion that the relic itself will cause harm to the person who steals it (apart from possible negative karmic consequences). In contrast to the swift retribution that awaits those who mistreat the Christian saint's relics, the Buddha's relics do not punish those who steal them, and this is in keeping with the uniformly benevolent character associated with the Buddha. In the context of the Buddhist worldview, the locus of reward and punishment is the individual; the Buddha and, by extension, his relics do not play an active role in the impersonal unfolding of karmic consequences. Despite these noteworthy differences, however, one is finally impressed by the striking similarities in these Buddhist and Christian accounts of relic theft which testify to the power of these sacred objects left behind by the "very special dead."⁷⁹

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¹ For an early Christian affirmation of the cult of relics, see St. Augustine's *City of God* 22.8-9. Calvin's *Traité des Reliques* represents an influential Reformation critique of the practice; see *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, v. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958), pp. 289-341. Good general

bibliographies on Christian relic veneration can be found in Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), and Stephen Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also the exhaustive bibliography compiled by Christoph Wolters and Gudrun Sporbeck-Bressem in *Reliquien: Verehrung und Erklärung*, ed. by Anton Legner (Köln: Schnütgen Museum, 1989), pp. 370-395.

² Geary, *Furta Sacra*.

³ Despite a substantial number of articles on the cult of relics, and a very extensive literature on *stūpas*, there is no comprehensive study of the Buddhist cult of relic veneration published to date. Important studies on various aspects of the phenomenon of Buddhist relic veneration include the following: Paul Mus, *Barabudur: esquisse d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes* (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1935); André Bareau, "La Construction et le culte des stūpa d'après les *Vinaya-piṭaka*," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 50 (1962), pp. 229-274; "La Parinirvāṇa du Bouddha et la naissance de la religion bouddhique," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 61 (1974), pp. 275-299; "Les Récits canoniques des funérailles du Buddha et leurs anomalies," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 62 (1975), pp. 151-189; Nancy Falk, "To Gaze on the Sacred Traces," *History of Religions* 16 (1976-77), pp. 281-293. Gregory Schopen has recently contributed several significant articles on the history of Buddhist relic veneration in India, including, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985), pp. 9-49; "Burial 'ad sanctos' and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism," *Religion* 17 (1987), pp. 193-225; and "On the Buddha and His Bones: The Conception of a Relic in the Inscriptions from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108 (1988), pp. 527-538. I have recently completed a doctoral thesis on the cult of relic veneration in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition entitled, "The Relics of the Buddha: A Study of the Cult of Relic Veneration in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition of Sri Lanka" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1990). This work traces the Sri Lankan tradition of relic veneration based primarily on the Pāli chronicle literature, with some attention to the Indian background of the relic cult and the relevant archeological evidence.

⁴ Davids' distaste for the cultic aspects of the Buddhist tradition may have been influenced, in part, by anti-Catholic currents in the Victorian period. See Philip C. Almond's recent study, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 123-126. Ananda Wickremaratne, in his recent examination of Rhys Davids' life and work, has also noted the influence of Rhys Davids' Non-Conformist religious upbringing on his scholarship. See his *The Genesis of an Orientalist: Thomas William Rhys Davids and Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (Columbia, MS: South Asia Books, 1985), pp. 181f. This may be seen as further evidence in support of Jonathan Z. Smith's recent suggestion that the modern western study of religion, with its tendency to ignore the significance of religious ritual, has been largely a "Protestant exercise"; see *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 98ff.).

⁵ See Trainor, "The Relics of the Buddha."

⁶ As Geary notes, however, the medieval Christian theft accounts in many cases do not provide historically reliable testimony to the actual theft of a relic; see *Furta Sacra*, p. 132.

⁷ An exception to this is the description of the destruction of relics by Indian invaders under the leadership of the Kalingan king Māgha in the thirteenth century, described in *Cūlavamsa* 80.68-69. This incident would appear to fall into a different category from the thefts that Geary chronicles, however, since in this instance the relics were not taken for the purposes of veneration, or even because of their potential economic value.

⁸ This mythic quality is not entirely absent from the Christian accounts, and of course supra-normal occurrences are commonly associated with the arrival of the relics of the saints. Nevertheless, the Christian accounts are generally closer in time to the relic translations that they chronicle, and in many cases they are based on actual historical events.

⁹ *Dīgha Nikāya*, ed. by T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter (London: Pali Text Society, 1889-1910), v. 2, pp. 72-168. This text is an important early component in the emerging Theravāda biographical tradition.

¹⁰ See Bareau's "La composition et les étapes de la formation progressive du *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* ancien," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 66 (1979), pp. 45-103. For a critical assessment of this approach, see Schopen, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism," pp. 15-16.

¹¹ This is not to imply that traditional Buddhist scholarship has never sought to identify later additions to this text. For example, as we shall see below, the fifth-century commentator Buddhaghosa attributed the closing verses of this text to monks in Sri Lanka.

¹² *Dīgha Nikāya*, v. 2, p. 141; this translation and those following are mine unless otherwise noted.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁴ J. Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchī* (Delhi: Swati Publications, 1982), v. 1, pp. 112-119; 214-215; v. 2, pls. 15, 61.

¹⁵ *Dīgha Nikāya*, v. 2, p. 166.

¹⁶ There is some evidence that the tradition has attempted to distinguish the physical appearance of the Buddha's relics from the corporeal remains of others. Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* describes the Buddha's remains after his cremation as "similar to jasmine buds, washed pearls and gold": *Sumaṅgala-vilāsini*, ed. by W. Stede, 2nd ed. (London: Pali Text Society, 1968-71), v. 2, pp. 603-604. I have never come across a textual account of any effort to distinguish authentic relics on the basis of their appearance, however. The relics that I saw in Sri Lanka varied in appearance. Some had the brownish color and irregular surface texture that one would expect to see in old bones. Others were smoothly polished and pearly in appearance.

¹⁷ Presumably these latter two objects could be claimed as relics because they had come in contact with the Buddha's corporeal remains and thus constituted "relics of use" (*pāribhogika-dhātuyo*).

¹⁸ The authoritative character of this account became apparent in my conversations with monks in Sri Lanka. When asked where the relics in their monasteries came from, they invariably referred to this account of the relic division. Bareau has examined this tradition of the ten original monuments, and constructed a complex hypothesis to account for the gradual development of the tradition, arguing that pre-Buddhist monuments were "Buddhasized" because of the need for concrete objects of devotion, and in order to engage the powerful protective power associated with the person of the Buddha. He concludes that the list of ten sites was fixed by the beginning of the Mauryan period (third century BCE). See his article, "Sur l'origine des piliers dits d'Aśoka, des *stūpa* et des arbres sacrés du

Bouddhisme primitif," *Indologica Taurinensia* 2 (1974), pp. 9-36. The number eight, with the addition of two, may reflect the common Indian symbolism of the four cardinal directions and their four intermediaries, plus up and down, conveying a sense of universality. I am indebted to John Stratton Hawley for this suggestion.

¹⁹ *Dīgha Nikāya*, v. 2, p. 167.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

²¹ It is incorrect to refer to textual development in the sense of written texts at this point in the history of Buddhism since the canon was probably not committed to writing before the first century BCE; it should be kept in mind that we are referring here to a developing oral tradition. It is unclear if this list predates the reduction of the canon to a written form. For an insightful analysis of the way in which a written canon was part of a broader process of self-definition on the part of the Sri Lankan Mahāvihārin community, see Steven Collins, "On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990), pp. 89-126.

²² It is striking that the devotional centers include not only human habitations, but also the celestial realms above and the domains of the serpent-deities below. As we'll see below, human beings are in a position to benefit most from the presence of relics because they alone are capable of gaining realization of the Buddha's teaching and liberation from saṃsāra.

²³ Buddhaghosa, *Manorathapūraṇī*, p. 805, as cited by W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 2nd ed. (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1966), p. 116; Rahula quotes a Sinhalese edition to which I have not had access.

²⁴ *Buddhavaṃsa and Cariyāpīṭaka*, ed. and tr. by N. A. Jayawickrama (London: Pali Text Society, 1974), p. 101.

²⁵ The Theravāda tradition recognizes three categories of relics: *sārīrikam* ("corporeal"); *pāribhogikam* ("relating to use or enjoyment"); and *uddesikam* ("commemorative"). The third category is understood to refer to images of the Buddha. This threefold classification dates back at least to the time of the prose sections of the Jātaka stories, traditionally attributed to Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE), though based on traditional materials that predate him. See *The Jātaka, Together with Its Commentary*, ed. by V. Fausbøll (London: Trübner & Co., 1877-96), v. 4, p. 228.

²⁶ The passage also includes the "excellent footprint" (*padam seṭṭham*), the imprint of the Buddha's foot, which is also a relic of use. The most famous example of this category of relic in Sri Lanka is the great pilgrimage site on the summit of a mountain called Śrī Pada (Adam's Peak) in the central part of the island.

²⁷ *Dīpavaṃsa: An Ancient Buddhist Historical Record*, ed. and tr. by Hermann Oldenberg (London: Williams & Norgate, 1879).

²⁸ *The Mahāvaṃsa*, ed. by Wilhelm Geiger (London: Pali Text Society, 1958). For the dating of these two chronicles, see K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), pp. 115; 118.

²⁹ John Ross Carter examines the complex significance of refuge in the Triple Gem in *The Threefold Refuge in the Theravāda Buddhist Tradition*, ed. by John Ross Carter, et al. (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1982), pp. 1-15.

³⁰ Yet note the tradition, attested in the chronicles, that the Buddha Gotama himself and his predecessors enshrined relics during visits to Sri Lanka at places that later became the locations for additional enshrinements. See, for example, chapters one and fifteen of the *Mahāvaṃsa*.

³¹ *Mahāvaṃsa* 17.2.

³² *Ibid.*, 17.3.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ This is not to imply that there are no accounts of relics being given voluntarily. For example, as we noted above, there is a tradition that the god Sakka was in possession of the right eye-tooth and the right collar-bone relics of the Buddha; he handed over the eye-tooth for enshrinement in the Thūpārāma relic monument in Anurādhapura. The emperor Aśoka also provided relics for this enshrinement, including the Buddha's alms bowl (*Mahāvamsa* 17.10-21). The emperor Aśoka and the god Sakka both serve as exemplars of the lay Buddhist ideal, and their willingness to hand over the relics no doubt reflects the quality of generosity (*dāna*) that is central to that religious ideal. As we shall see below, the serpent-deities (*nāgas*) who are the "victims" of the relic thefts are much more ambivalent figures in the Buddhist cosmology. It is entirely in keeping with the *nāgas'* lower cosmological status (which closely parallels their relatively limited progress along the path to liberation) that they would refuse to hand over relics voluntarily.

³⁵ *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī*, v. 2, p. 609.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Literally, "because of [his] having taken [it] by theft": *corikāya gahitattā*. This passage makes it clear that the category of theft has been applied to this act by those within the Theravāda tradition.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ This is also a common motif in Christian relic theft accounts; see Geary's *Furta Sacra*, p. 138.

³⁹ See *Vinayaṭīkā*, ed. by H. Oldenberg (London: Pali Text Society, 1879-83), v. 3, pp. 41-67.

⁴⁰ Vācissaratthera, *The Chronicle of the Thūpa and The Thūpavamsa*, ed. and tr. by N. A. Jayawickrama (London: Pali Text Society, 1971). For the dating of the *Thūpavamsa*, see the translator's introduction, p. xxiv.

⁴¹ *Dhātuvamsa*, ed. by Kamburupitiye Nandarātana Thera (Colombo: Cultural Publications Co. Ltd., 1984). For the dating of the *Dhātuvamsa*, see the foreword to this edition, p. xiii.

⁴² *Thūpavamsa*, pp. 124; 239. The first number cited refers to Jayawickrama's translation which I have quoted here and in subsequent passages (except where noted); the second number cited refers to his edition of the Pāli text in the same volume.

⁴³ *Dhātuvamsa*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ The *nāga* traditions preserved in Hindu and Buddhist texts, along with their iconographical representations, are comprehensively catalogued in J. Ph. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore, or, The Nāgas in Hindu Legend and Art* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1926); Heinrich Zimmer's *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, ed. by Joseph Campbell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 59-90, presents a brief but influential treatment of the *nāga* symbolism in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

⁴⁵ These are treated in detail by Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore*, pp. 93-165.

⁴⁶ E.g., the Buddha overpowers a great fire-breathing *nāga* at Uruvelā by means of his supra-normal psychic power (*iddhi*); *Vinayaṭīkā*, v. 1, pp. 24-25. Vogel details other incidents: *Indian Serpent-Lore*, pp. 95-131. There is also the famous Mucalinda incident in which the *nāga-rāja* Mucalinda shelters the Buddha from a violent storm by coiling about him and opening his hood; see *Vinayaṭīkā*, v. 1, p. 3.

⁴⁷ The pervasiveness of this fundamental Indian religious motif of bringing the chaotic forces of the water (symbolized by the *nāga*) under the control of cosmic order is clearly evidenced in the cosmic battle between Kṛṣṇa and Kālīya; see John

Stratton Hawley, "Krishna's Cosmic Victories," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47 (1979), pp. 201-221.

⁴⁸ This theme comes out clearly in the story of the *nāga* who tried to be ordained as a Buddhist monk in order to gain rebirth as a human (*Vinayaṭīkā*, v. 1, pp. 86-88); it is noteworthy that candidates for higher ordination in the Buddhist saṅgha are referred to as *nāgas* in the ordination ritual, a fact that is generally explained by reference to this story. S. J. Tambiah argues persuasively that the Buddhist ordination ritual draws upon the *nāga* symbolism to mark the status transformation from life in the world, signified by the *nāga*'s associations with sexuality and virility, to the life of ascetic renunciation, signified by the monk's shaved head and yellow robes. The continued significance of the *nāga* in the contemporary practice of the Buddhist tradition in Thailand is insightfully documented here as well; see his *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults of North-east Thailand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 103-115; 168-175; 285-304.

⁴⁹ *Thūpavaṃsa*, pp. 124-26; 239-40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Mahāvamsa* 31:14. On the significance of the *patthanā*, both in classical sources and contemporary Sri Lankan Buddhist practice, see Richard Gombrich, *Precept and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 217-227.

⁵² *Vamsatthappakāsinī*, ed. by G. P. Malalasekera (London: Pali Text Society, 1935-36), p. 563.

⁵³ *Thūpavaṃsa*, pp. 128; 241.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 129; 242-43.

⁵⁵ Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, p. 284.

⁵⁶ *Thūpavaṃsa*, p. 243; the translation here is mine.

⁵⁷ Geary notes an analogous motif in the Christian relic theft accounts; see *Furta Sacra*, pp. 152-154.

⁵⁸ *The Milindapañho*, ed. by V. Trenckner (London: Pali Text Society, 1962), p. 309-310.

⁵⁹ *Thūpavaṃsa*, pp. 133; 246.

⁶⁰ Gananath Obeyesekere has suggested that the belief in the continued presence of the Buddha and the arahants in their relics may derive from the tradition that the Buddha refused to define the nature of an arahant after death. See G. Obeyesekere, "The Buddhist Pantheon in Ceylon and Its Extensions" in *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*, ed. by Manning Nash (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 8f.

⁶¹ *Thūpavaṃsa*, pp. 129-30; 243.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 131; 244.

⁶³ *Dhātuvamsa*, p. 52.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ As noted above, *nāgas* are commonly portrayed as the guardians of great treasures. In both Hindu and Buddhist iconography, *nāgas* are depicted as guardian figures (*dvārapālas*) presiding over the entrances to temples. For a catalogue of archeological evidence of *nāga* veneration in Sri Lanka, see R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *Robe and Plow: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1979), pp. 215-219.

⁶⁸ *Dhātuvamsa*, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁹ Literally, "with a good mind/heart" (*kusalacittena*); *Dhātuvamsa*, p. 18.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* This story is identified in the text as the *Haṃsarāja-jātaka*. This appears to be a reference to the *Suvaṇṇahaṃsa-jātaka* (no. 136) in which the following verse occurs: “yaṃ laddhaṃ tena tuṭṭhabbaṃ atilobho hi pāpako” (1.476).

⁷² Buddhaghosa, *Atthasālinī*, ed. by E. Müller (London: Pali Text Society, 1897), p. 97-98; translated as *The Expositor (Atthasālinī)*, tr. by Pe Maung Tin (London: Pali Text Society, 1920-21), v. 1, pp. 129-130. I have quoted from this translation.

⁷³ *Vinayaṭṭhaka*, v. 3, p. 58.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 3, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 67.

⁷⁶ “*Dhātuhorakama horakamak nēma.*” I learned of this Sinhala saying in a conversation with Dr. W. S. Karunatilake, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Kelaniya, who verified its authenticity in conversation with a monk. I do not know if it is attested in any texts, or the extent of its currency among Sri Lankan Buddhists.

⁷⁷ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 163.

⁷⁸ For an example of the threatening, as well as beneficent, character of Christian relics, see G. H. Doble, “The Relics of St. Petros,” *Antiquity* 13 (1939), pp. 403-415. In this twelfth-century account, the relics are stolen by a spiteful monk “possessed with a devil,” and two boys who impiously handle the saint’s remains are immediately afflicted with paralysis (p. 406). The relics are ultimately returned to the place from which they were stolen, and all unfolds according to divine providence. While the initial theft is interpreted as a divine punishment for the sins of the community, the translation ultimately redounds to the saint’s favor and the community’s well-being: “For he who before was barely known and honoured among his own people in Cornwall only, was now extolled and exalted among kings and princes throughout the whole world” (p. 404).

⁷⁹ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 69.

EXPLAINING RELIGIOUS IDEAS: ELEMENTS OF A COGNITIVE APPROACH

PASCAL BOYER

Summary

This paper outlines an anthropological approach to religious representations that is grounded in recent findings and hypotheses in cognitive psychology. The argument proceeds in four points. First, the main goal of this framework is to account for the recurrence of certain types of mental representations in religious systems. Recurrent features are not necessarily universal. They are the outcome of cognitive systems that make certain representations easier to acquire than others. Second, a cognitive approach must take into account the diversity of religious representations. It is argued here that religious systems bring together ontological assumptions, causal claims, episode types and social categories. These four “repertoires” may have different functional properties, and may therefore be acquired and represented in different ways. Third, universal features of tacit, intuitive systems may impose strong constraints on the variability of religious ideas. This is illustrated on the basis of ethnographic data. Finally, the type of representations one finds in religious belief-systems consists in conjectures, the cognitive salience of which is variable and should be evaluated in precise terms.

Contrary to other domains of anthropological study, theories of religious belief and action have not been much influenced so far by the remarkable development of cognitive science. True, there is in anthropology a subdiscipline known as “cognitive anthropology” (or “ethnosemantics”) which focuses on the cognitive aspects of cultural representations. This approach, however, has been so far limited to representations of the everyday world: biological taxonomies, classification of daily activities, kinship terminologies, etc.¹ Religion, on the other hand, is relatively neglected in cognitive approaches. This is paradoxical, in view of the importance of religious belief and action in anthropological theory and practice. There are, obviously, some notable exceptions to this generalisation (see e.g. Dougherty 1985, Dougherty & Fernandez 1980, 1982, Lawson & Mc Cauley 1990). By and large, however, the study of religious belief and action is still conducted in the framework of anthropological theories which pay little if any attention to the findings and hypotheses of cognitive science.²

In this paper, I will present the elements of a possible cognitive approach to religious representations.³ This paper is therefore largely programmatic and partly speculative. The research programme, however, is not very far removed from actual cognitive research, and the speculation is mostly consistent with both anthropological and psychological research. My aim here is to show that a cognitive approach is possible, and to examine how it can account for the representation and transmission of religious representations. The theory is about *religious ideas* rather than “religions” in the broad sense. The aim is to describe the processes whereby subjects acquire, represent and transmit certain ideas and practices. The theory may not be sufficient to account for the social dynamics of religious movements or the historical development of religious doctrines. Such “macro-phenomena” of religious transmission are not directly within the scope of a cognitive theory.

In the following pages I will put forward four main hypotheses. The first one is that the goal of a cognitive approach is to account for the *recurrence* of certain features of religious representations in many different cultures. This general objective is often misconstrued, and I will try and give a formulation which avoids certain common misunderstandings. The second point is the *cognitive diversity* of religious ideas. In a given culture, the set of representations that constitute each individual’s religious ideas is distributed in several “repertoires”, which have different functional properties. Here I will identify four such cognitive repertoires, which are particularly important in the description of religious representations. The third hypothesis is about the *cognitive constraints* on the content and organisation of religious ideas. Far from being pure cultural constructions, religious systems appear to be strongly constrained by universal, probably innate properties of cognitive systems, especially those properties which govern people’s intuitive understanding of their everyday world. A fourth point is that we need a precise notion of *cognitive salience* in order to describe and explain the processes of acquisition and belief-fixation in the domain of cultural knowledge. For each of these four points, I will try to show that a cognitive approach provides a plausible alternative to classical anthropological theories of religion.

I

UNIVERSALS, RECURRENCE AND EXPLANATION

It may seem the obvious first step, in the construction of a general theory of religion, to enumerate the universal features which the theory will set out to explain. Indeed, this is very much what can be found in most anthropological attempts so far.⁴ Here, however, I will argue that this seemingly obvious way of proceeding is in fact mistaken and misleading, and that the search for universals is the main reason why anthropology has not produced a theoretically plausible account of religious ideas. In what follows, I will try to show how the problem of universals conceals other, important aspects of the problem.

The main starting point of the theory outlined here is that, in the variety of cultural systems of religious belief, there is a notable *recurrence* of certain precise themes or ideas, and that this recurrence ought to be explained. These themes or ideas are not universal, but they constitute a repertoire most elements of which can be found in most cultures, in one form or another. To take but a few examples, it is assumed in many (but not all) cultures that a non-physical component of persons survives after death, to become an invisible intentional being, endowed with perceptions, beliefs and intentions. In the same way, it is assumed in many (but not all) cultures that certain people are especially likely to receive direct inspiration or messages from extra-natural agencies, like gods and spirits. In many (but not all) cultures it is admitted that performing certain ritual recipes in the exact way and order prescribed can bring about changes in physical states of affairs, through causal mechanisms which are presumed but not observable. Such features are widespread in many cultures, yet they are not necessarily present in all of them. Each feature is present in most cultures, each culture has many of those features in its set of religious ideas, yet none of them should be taken *a priori* as universal.

Two obstacles to the study of recurrent features

In cultural anthropology, the recurrence of certain religious ideas is not explained in a satisfactory way, for the simple reason that is

not explained at all. The few features I mentioned above are well-known to most students of religion. Their recurrence in different cultures, however, is not considered an object of scientific inquiry, for two symmetrical reasons.

A first obstacle is the pre-theoretical, instinctive form of relativism that is somehow intrinsic to anthropological investigation. Because anthropologists are professionally trained to detect and emphasize cultural differences, they naturally under-estimate the recurrence of similar ideas in different cultures. Moreover, when this recurrence is noticed, it is often treated as a deceptive appearance, which conceals underlying differences. It is widely assumed that apparently similar beliefs cannot really be similar, because they occur in different "cultural contexts". This idea, however, is vague enough to contain both a trivial truth and a profound fallacy. Take for example the widespread idea that the gods are so remote that one cannot communicate with them except through the channel of inspired mediums. Obviously, this idea can take on very different "meanings" in different cultures; more precisely, it carries rather different implications, for those who think that the gods have a direct influence on the living's well-being, and those who think that they do not. The idea that certain people are privileged "channels", however, is the same idea in both contexts. We need a theory that could account for the fact that this idea is so widespread, while others are not.

Conversely, the general study of religious ideas is often hampered by the widespread idea, that "human nature", the proper subject-matter of cultural anthropology, is manifest only in the universal features of the species. What is not universal in human cultures has therefore nothing to do with human nature. In other words, one assumes that there is a division, between cultural invariants on the one hand, which are explainable by various non-cultural factors (ecological, biological, psychological, etc.), and the rest. Cultural features which are not universal are *ipso facto* outside the influence of those various ecological, biological, psychological etc., factors. If certain traits of religious ideas are widespread but not universal, they are therefore considered outside the scope of a general theory of religion. Obviously, this argument rests on a confusion of levels, between processes and their outcome. That a

universal process exists does not imply that its outcome will be the same in all possible circumstances. It is precisely the point of an explanatory theory to reduce diversity, and show in what manner diverse phenomena result from the encounter of general mechanisms, on the one hand, and a manifold of contingently diverse circumstances on the other.

Generative and selective models

This “probabilistic” approach to recurrent features in religious systems has important consequences for the type of model that is supposed to account for religious ideas. Here I must draw a broad distinction between two types of accounts that can be put forward in the explanation of the emergence of recurrent features in a population of organisms. I will label these accounts *generative* and *selective*. Given a series of recurrent features, a generative model posits an underlying mechanism such that, if it is present, it will provide a sufficient explanation for the occurrence of these features. Take for example the fact that, in all tigers, the anatomical structure of the retractile claws is exactly similar. A sufficient explanation of the recurrence is provided by models of genotype inheritance combined with models of embryological development. Selective models, on the other hand, account for recurrent features by positing (i) a set of underlying mechanisms which are necessary yet insufficient to produce the recurrence, and (ii) a set of inputs such that, given the underlying mechanisms, they will produce the recurrence. This type of explanation would be necessary if we want to explain, for example, why tigers have retractile claws rather than non-retractile ones. In such a case, an evolutionary explanation will typically invoke (i) a series of random mutations, providing the input to (ii) a fitness-maximizing mechanism (natural selection), the combination of which provides a sufficient explanation. The fitness-maximizing mechanism, on its own, provides necessary, yet insufficient conditions for the recurrence.

It should be obvious, from this example, that generative and selective models can be invoked in order to explain the same recurrence, seen from a different point of view. This does not mean, however, that choosing between these two explanatory schemes is

a matter of convenience or subjective preference. The notion of a “point of view” is to be understood here in a precise sense, as implying a set of clearly defined goals for the explanation. Given such a precisely defined objective, choosing a generative account, where a selective one would have been pertinent, may generate considerable problems. Biological theory for instance would be in serious trouble if it tried to explain evolutionary trends by generative models, e.g. explaining the evolution of vertebrates by some underlying mechanisms that “pushed” fish out of the water and made them become reptiles. The evolutionary scenarios developed in biology do not require any generative models of evolutionary trends, and in fact exclude them explicitly.

Selective models and cultural transmission

Applied to cultural ideas, the notion of a selective model means that, given certain circumstances and a variety of mental representations entertained by a population of subjects, some of those representations are more likely than others to be stored in the subjects’ memories and communicated to other subjects. Many anthropological models are, implicitly or explicitly, based on this evolutionary metaphor,⁵ and treat the transmission of ideas as a function of their “survival” value. A set of constraints is posited, such that it will make it more likely for certain representations to “survive” (i.e. be memorized and transmitted) than for others. This is the starting point of various models of cultural evolution (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman 1981, Cavalli-Sforza 1986), “gene-culture co-evolution” (Lumsden & Wilson 1981) or “dual inheritance” (Boyd & Richerson 1985). These various theories share the premise that the recurrence of cultural traits must be explained by selection processes rather than by generative mechanisms. They include precise hypotheses about the transmission or diffusion of cultural material. The point of departure is that, given a random input of cultural traits at generation G_i , a process can be described, such that its operation on the input will increase the relative probability of certain traits appearing at generation G_{i+1} (and of course decrease the probability of other traits). Selective models generally focus on *transmission processes* as the main cause of recurrence.

Another, qualitative approach that is based on a selective stance is Sperber's notion of an "epidemiology of ideas" (1985, 1991). The argument is based on an analogy, to the effect that, by and large, the relation of anthropology to psychology can be construed as similar to that of epidemiology to physiology. While physiology puts forward hypotheses about, e.g. the way various viruses or germs may affect the body's functioning, epidemiology on the other hand is concerned with the ways in which diseases spread. In much the same way, psychology is concerned, among other things, with the acquisition or representation of certain ideas or beliefs. Anthropology, on the other hand, specializes in observing the spread of ideas or beliefs. It may focus on either short-lived epidemics, like fashions, or more stable endemic infections like traditions. An important consequence of this notion of "epidemiology" is that psychological processes are directly pertinent to anthropological theory. In the same way as such physiological aspects have direct consequences for the spread of a given disease in given circumstances, the psychological processes of representations and transmission are bound to affect the patterns of cognitive "epidemics".

The ideas presented in this paper are, by and large, consistent with the assumptions of these selective models. I will claim that micro-processes of cognition and interaction impose strong constraints on the diffusion and transmission of religious assumptions, thereby leading to the recurrence of ideas observed in the religious domain. Before proceeding to this point, however, we must examine the types of mental representations which are the object of such selective processes of cultural transmission.

II

THE COGNITIVE DIVERSITY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

In anthropological descriptions, religious representations are generally presented as constituting shared, integrated, explicit, context-free general propositions, e.g. "the spirits dwell in the rivers", "the ancestors are invisible", "only shamans can negotiate with the spirits", etc. As many authors have observed, such descriptions in terms of "collective representations" are

extremely ambiguous, as far as actual cognitive processes are concerned.⁶ Obviously, a cognitive approach to religious ideas should provide precise answer to the questions concerning the actual representations involved, rather than work on the basis of *ad hoc* descriptions. In the following pages, I will try to put forward the elements of such an approach. My first contention is that a cognitively realistic description of religious ideas will have to take into account the *cognitive diversity* of the religious domain. That is to say, the representations we call “religious” belong to different domains and may have different cognitive properties. I will then examine the possible contributions of cognitive science to the study of the different types of representations in question.

Four repertoires of representations

Religion should not be construed as an isolated domain. This point is generally accepted by most anthropologists, who consider it a mistake to study the religious life of a given culture as though it was isolated from other domains of social life. More recently, most anthropologists have come to agree that such a division would be illegitimate for a deeper reason, namely, because the very category “religion” may well be a Western construction, of limited validity in the study of different cultures. Here I will not enter such debates; I will accept as a tentative characterisation of the domain, the fact that the cultural representations we are focusing on concern unobservable extra-human entities and processes. Such a practical definition is more or less what anthropologists have in mind when they talk about “religion”, and will be largely sufficient for the purposes of the present argument.

In the general discussions concerning the coherence (or lack of coherence) of the notion of “religion”, one aspect is generally left aside, that of the *cognitive unity* of the religious domain. Theories of religion, in either anthropology or sociology, are generally based on the implicit premise, that all religious ideas are acquired and represented in the same way. This assumption is itself based on a more general principle, following which most mental representations are acquired and represented in the same way. Whether based on an empiricist or rationalist epistemology, anthropological models treat

all cultural representations as functionally similar. Against this view, however, it must be noted that most recent advances in experimental psychology, especially in the domain of cognitive development, insist on the *functional specificity* of certain types of representations.

In a parallel fashion, I will argue that the representations concerning extrahuman entities and processes belong to different *repertoires*, which have different functional properties. Here I will consider four such repertoires, in which the most important elements of religious belief-systems can be found. They are the *ontological*, the *causal*, the *episode* and the *social roles* repertoires, respectively. I will try to show that describing and explaining people's religious ideas consists in describing what is included, in a given culture, in each of these repertoires, and explaining how their contents are gradually made plausible. Before turning to this point, however, let me give a succinct description of the typical contents of each repertoire.

The *ontological* repertoire is the set of assumptions people entertain about the existence of non-observable entities. This catalogue will include ideas about there being, e.g., a distant impersonal Creator somewhere in the skies, water-spirits near ponds and rivers, invisible ancestors lurking in the darkness of the forest, etc. This catalogue of ideas is called ontological because it consists of elementary assumptions about what sorts of things there are in the world.

The *causal* repertoire is a catalogue of ideas and assumptions about causal connections between the entities described in the ontological repertoire, on the one hand, and observable events and states of affairs on the other. Thus, a causal repertoire may include assumptions like "gods get angry if no sacrifice is performed" or "reciting this formula will guarantee good crops". It is important to note that such a repertoire may include generalisations of this kind, as well as propositions concerning singular events or states of affairs, like "So and so got disease X because he did not observe prohibition Y", or "we had no crops last year because of such and such's witchcraft".

The *episode* repertoire consists of descriptions of a certain range of event-types, which are connected to the ideas contained in the

ontological and causal repertoire. In order to describe a religion, one must identify a certain set of actions and interactions which are deemed to be of particular types. Ritual performance, obviously, is the most important type of religious episodes. Again, it is important to note that the representations involved may be about singular objects, e.g. memories of ritual X being performed last week, or about generalised types, like the list of things to do in order to perform a certain rite in a proper way.

The *social roles* repertoire is a catalogue of representations concerning differences between people. In this we will include people's ideas concerning their priests, shamans, or religious specialists, but also ideas concerning other differences which are relevant in religious action. For instance it will include people's ideas about gender where relevant, about growth and maturation where an adult-child opposition is concerned, people's ideas about the effects of initiation, etc. All these ideas are used to characterize, sometimes categorize social actors, either *in abstracto* or as particular persons.

An ethnographic illustration

In order to make these explanations more intuitively clear, let me take an example of their concrete application, concerning the religious ideas of the Fang of Cameroon (see Boyer 1986, 1990 for more detail). In the following sections I will use this example to illustrate some of the general claims I want to make about religious ideas. Although the specific contents of the "repertoires" are, obviously, particular to Fang culture, it must be stressed that the general conclusions I will put forward are in fact based on much broader ethnographic comparisons, which cannot be included in this paper. For the sake of simplicity, I will introduce each theoretical statement as though it had been developed in order to explain the particular Fang data. It must be kept in mind that it is in fact of general relevance for the acquisition and representation of religious ideas.

Ontological ideas. Let me first take the repertoire of ontological ideas, which seems to be organized around three main points: a pair of distant personified gods, the ghosts (*bekong*) and the spirits (*minkugu*). In Fang mythology, there are two creator-gods.

Mebeghe is the name of a god understood to be the creator of all natural things while Nzame is supposed to be at the origin of most cultural techniques and social institutions. It must be stressed that the narratives concerning the origins are not the object of much attention or speculation. Nzame and Mebeghe are remote gods. Their powers are not really invoked or used in the explanation of natural or social occurrences, although there are individual variations in this domain. The role of Nzame is sometimes conceived as that of an impersonal, purposeless fate. It must be pointed out, however, that such a notion of contingency is alien to the Fang intellectual climate, as to that of most African societies. If salient events are to be explained at all, they have to be explained in terms of goals and intentions; this is precisely the type of explanations provided by the concepts of ghosts and spirits.

The term *bekong* could best be translated as “ghosts”. After death a person’s “shadow” is supposed to become a wandering spirit, generally malevolent until it is given appropriate funeral rites. It is then said to dwell in ghost-villages, and is supposed to protect the villagers. Correct performance of traditional rites is indispensable, lest ghosts may “throw” illnesses of various kinds at the living. Ghosts have beliefs, desires, feelings, emotions, and generally all the non-physical characteristics of humans. In Fang discourse, however, they are generally treated as a kind (“the ghosts do this”, “the ghosts want that”, etc.) rather than as individuals.

The mystical personnel also includes rather mysterious creatures called *minkugu*, generally glossed as “spirits”. These are not clearly identified as ghosts. They are described as smaller, not related to village clans and lineages in a defined way, and rather uncanny. They too can “throw” illnesses, and some specialists say their remedies are given by the *minkugu* rather than the ghosts. Although most people insist that there is a difference in kind between *bekong* and *minkugu*, their ideas concerning the exact differences in powers, appearance, etc., are extremely vague.

Causal connections. The repertoire of causal connections includes many general connections between the entities described above and various classes of events, which however are generally less salient than representations of singular episodes. It is for instance admitted that the ghosts can trigger various kinds of misfortune if the living

do not perform appropriate traditional rites. People who hold such ideas, however, rather focus on memories of singular occurrences, in which a certain disease was diagnosed as “thrown” by the ghosts, and then successfully cured. In the same way, the fact that illness is commonly caused by witchcraft is stated in very vague and general terms. People, however, have precise memories of many singular cases, with the problem, the diagnosis and the outcome. The same remark applies to magical charms and recipes. While their general efficacy is stated only in the vaguest terms, people have numerous accounts of the successes or failures of precisely identified recipes.

Episodes. These representations concern categories of actions, notably ritual actions, related to the entities of the ontological repertoire. The repertoire includes names for complex scripted actions. To take but one example, *nku melan* is an initiation ritual during which neophytes are shown the skulls of their ancestors, usually concealed in special shrines. The main characteristic of such actions is that they are represented as rigidly scripted. They consist in a list of sub-actions which, from the actors’ viewpoint, must be performed in the appropriate way and in the appropriate order, by the appropriate specialist. Although actual performance may display great variations, the participants are generally unaware of those changes or consider them insignificant.

Social roles. There are of course many categories designating types of people. Here I will only mention the subset that is directly pertinent to religious ideas. Some of these categories are supposedly descriptive, identifying some persons by virtue of the rituals they have learned to perform. Thus, a diviner is called *mod ngam*, “divination-man” or a story-teller specialized in myths is a *mbomm-vet*, “harp player”. A crucial category is that of *ngengang* (“healer”, in fact many types of ritual specialists). Most rituals connected with questions of magical connections, and relationships with the ghosts, require the intervention of a *ngengang*. Such activity-based categories, however, presuppose another classification, this one in terms of unobservable qualities. It is impossible in Fang society to be ascribed any religious role without being considered a *beyem*, that is, a person who carries an invisible organ called *evur*. Every living person either is or else is not a *beyem*, there is no intermediate point.

There is, however, no way of telling for sure whether any given person is or is not one. This is a matter of conjectures, based on the person's behaviour and ritual successes. The category *mimmie* ("simple folk") designates people who have no *evur*. Another important category is that of *ntuban nlot* ("pierced head") people, that is, people who have undergone specific initiation rites. Again, since these initiations are shrouded in secrecy, it is rather difficult to tell whether any given individual is or is not a member of that category.

Consequences of cognitive diversity

This presentation of Fang ideas differs from ordinary ethnographic presentations of religious ideas, in that the assumptions are presented as fragmented bits of information, with no indication of the "models" or "systems" they belong to.⁷ This is mainly in order to avoid the "intellectualist" or "theologistic" fallacy, which takes it for granted that all cultural representations are included in coherent, systematic models. The distinction made between those repertoires is of course on an analytical nature. The actual representations which are studied by anthropologists combine elements from several or all of these repertoires. For instance, people have ideas about ancestor-ghosts which combine ontological aspects (about the existence of such beings), causal ones (about their possible role in human affairs), some identification of episodes (e.g. the rituals that may be performed to placate them) and of social categories (concerning the type of specialists who perform those rituals).

The rationale for the division between those four categories is that the elements from different repertoires are likely to behave in functionally different ways, in the acquisition and fixation of belief. This is because each of these repertoires is in fact the extension to religious matters of conceptual structures and assumptions which can be found also in other, non-religious domains. Everyday knowledge comprises, among many other things, (i) a set of ontological assumptions, about what kinds of objects there are in the world and how different they may be; (ii) a set of principles on

which causal connections, in various domains of experience, are evaluated; (iii) some ways of dividing the continuous flow of action into discrete episodes; (iv) some general representations about the possible differences between persons. My main contention here is twofold: (i) that some implicit assumptions and principles from non-religious knowledge are carried over in religious representations; (ii) that these principles and assumptions play a crucial role in the acquisition and transmission of religious representations.

Furthermore, this “fragmented” description is more realistic from the point of view of acquisition. In most societies people do acquire their religious ideas in a fragmented, disjointed and often inconsistent form. They are faced with a mass of utterances and actions, as well as comments about those singular occurrences. As I said above, they are seldom if ever faced with systematic presentations of the local stock of religious presentations. Utterances are made because they have a precise point, actions are performed with a definite purpose. Now producing a consistent description of the religious world is very rarely the point of people’s utterances or the purpose of their actions. Only tangentially do they serve such a purpose. An obvious consequence is that we must have a precise description of the processes whereby people build more general models on the basis of such fragmented material.

All this leads us to the main question posed at the beginning of this paper. Some features of religious ideas appear to be particularly recurrent. A cognitive approach is based on the assumption that this recurrence may be at least partly explained by cognitive constraints on the acquisition and transmission of cultural representations. In other words, the theory would assume that certain representations, or combinations of representations, are optimally learnable or memorable. It is therefore no surprise that such features become recurrent properties of religious systems. This condition of “optimal learnability” is the fundamental point of a selective model of religious representations. In the next section I will try and present some possible directions for a cognitive approach to this problem.

III

INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Most anthropological theories are based on the assumption that cultural knowledge is only weakly constrained by cognitive processes, and that all its important aspects are culturally transmitted. Cultural anthropology, however, does not seem to have a very precise account of how this cultural transmission is taking place. The discipline generally adopts what Bloch (1985: *passim*) calls the “anthropological theory of cognition”, that is, the idea that people brought up in a culture are given a ready-made conceptual scheme, which is absorbed, as it were, in a mysterious way that is never described. As Bloch points out, this account of acquisition is obviously insufficient in the case of simple everyday concepts, like names for natural kinds and artefacts; one might think, *a fortiori*, that it is rather implausible as an account of the transmission of complex cultural ideas. This “theory of cognition” includes two particularly implausible assumptions. One is that cultural transmission is, by and large, a passive process. Minds are conceived as containers of ideas, which are more or less empty at the onset of cultural acquisition, and are gradually filled with whatever ready-made products are given by “the culture”. The other assumption is that this filling process is simple. Both assumptions, however, fly in the face of all the experimental evidence available in the domain of concept acquisition and belief-fixation (see e.g. Markman 1989 for a general survey).

Against this widespread notion of cultural transmission, I will contend that universal properties of human minds are likely to impose strong *cognitive constraints* on the range and organisation of cultural representations that can be transmitted from generation to generation. To be more precise, my hypothesis is that in each of the four repertoires described above, the religious assumptions are constrained, in non-trivial ways, by the assumptions that govern the non-religious or everyday representations of the repertoire. In other words, people’s representations about (religious) ontologies are constrained by their ordinary ontology, their ideas about (religious) causation are constrained by ordinary causal representations, and so on. In the following pages I will first survey the type

of psychological data and theories on which this assumption is based. This will be done mainly by considering some aspects of children's conceptual development; developmental studies provide particularly clear illustrations of the ways in which those assumptions are represented and constrain the range of beliefs subjects can entertain about a given object. I will then apply this kind of method to one of the four repertoires mentioned above, that of religious social roles.

Intuitive ontologies

A number of recent studies in conceptual development tend to shed light on processes which are directly relevant to the questions concerning religious ideas. In order to understand this, it may be of help to describe the theoretical background of those studies and hypotheses. In a "classical", Piagetian understanding of conceptual development, the child is assumed to apply general learning heuristics to a variety of experienced phenomena. The developmental stages identified in Piagetian frameworks are mainly described in formal, non-domain specific terms. At each stage the child is described as applying certain structural procedures, which do not depend on the type of phenomena concerned. These formal procedures are gradually modified on the basis of experience, leading to the next stage, at which point other formal procedures can be applied, again across conceptual domains. For instance the child's causal thinking develops from an "animistic" stage, in which all causal connections are attributed to intentions, to a later differentiation of intentional and mechanistic causation (see e.g. Piaget 1954, 1974, Laurendau & Pinard 1962, and a critique in Leslie 1979, Carey 1985, Leslie & Keeble 1987).

There are some reasons, however, to doubt the relevance of such structural cross-domain principles. First, cognitive studies tend to show that there are important functional differences between cognitive domains. To take but a few examples, the way subjects represent and remember faces is very different from the treatment of other types of visual stimuli; the way they make inferences about living kinds differs from the processes focused on artefacts or other non-living objects. Notions of causal connections may be very dif-

ferent, depending on the animate or inanimate nature of the objects concerned, from a very early age. Instead of describing human minds as “general processors” endowed with some all-purpose cognitive structures fed by perceptual inputs, psychological studies uncover *domain-specific* structures, which apply only to a limited domain of external phenomena. Furthermore, most recent research in developmental processes tends to show that such specialised structures appear very early in conceptual development. The way children reason, at any stage, depends on the conceptual domain to which the intellectual operations are applied. This type of research indicates that children’s conceptual development proceeds on the basis of strong *theoretical presumptions*, concerning the type of properties and generalities to be expected in different ontological domains (Keil 1979, 1987, Atran 1989). The presumptions concern large ontological domains such as physical objects, artefacts, living kinds, persons. They constitute “naïve” theories of the domains in question (R. Gelman 1990).

To take a simple example, even 4 year olds seem to make instance-based inductive generalisations in a different way, whether the objects concerned are artefacts or exemplars of living kinds (Gelman & Markman 1986: 203-205, Gelman & Markman 1987, *passim*, Keil 1986, Gelman & Coley 1991). Even small children assume that members of a living kind share undefined properties, that make them similar in spite of superficial differences. This assumption has a variety of consequences. Children for instance seem to make spontaneous inductive generalisations over natural kinds on the basis of single exemplars, even when their biological knowledge is minimal. Moreover, they seem to “project” certain properties rather than others. While the property of having certain organs is spontaneously projected from an exemplar to the kind in general, certain surface properties, such as weight, are not projected (Gelman & Markman 1986, 1987, Gelman 1988). Also, children find unnatural the suggestion that members of a living kind might be “transformed” into members of another kind, whereas such transformations are considered possible in artefacts (Keil 1986 *passim*, 1989: 183-215).

The child also appears to develop, from the early stages of cognitive development, strong expectations concerning the

behaviour of physical objects (Spelke 1988, 1990). For instance, the principles of continuity (objects move in continuous paths) and solidity (objects do not coincide in space) seem to be present in children as young as 4 months (Baillargeon 1987, Baillargeon & Hanko-Summers 1990).

Another domain which is the object of early theoretical development (roughly at the “pre-operational” stage in Piagetian terms) is that of mental processes. The child gradually develops a set of theoretical principles to do with the non-physical nature of mental entities such as thoughts, desires and dreams (Wellman & Estes 1986, Wellmann & Gelman 1988). Also, the child’s understanding of mental processes constitutes a naïve implicit theory, with causal assumptions concerning the relations between perceptions, thoughts and intentions (Astington, Harris & Orson 1988, Wellmann 1990, Perner 1991, Whiten 1991).

Such theories can be said to be “naïve” in that they are only partly congruent with adult notions, and constrain further conceptual development. The following are a series of tentative conclusions that can be drawn from this experimental work on such presumptions:

(i) they are *domain-specific*, and trigger functionally different cognitive processes, depending on the domain. In other words, acquiring knowledge does not imply applying an all-purpose, “theory-making” cognitive device to a variety of available stimuli. On the contrary, it implies applying significantly different cognitive heuristics to different domains;

(ii) they seem to develop *spontaneously*, independently of tuition or objective changes in the available information: for instance, children seem to shift from a “desire-based” naïve psychology to a “belief + desire” type of psychological explanation when they are about 4, without any changes in the kind of explanations or implicit explanations offered in their social environment. To put it very crudely, people learn much more than they have been taught;

(iii) such naïve conceptual presumptions are *connected in a complex way to later theoretical development*. In some cases, such as commonsense or “folk”-psychology, adult conceptions seem to flesh out the conceptual skeleton provided by naïve conceptions. They provide more material, more explanatory schemes, but never go

against the spontaneous assumptions. In other cases, such as the acquisition of mathematics or physics, it is necessary for subjects to acquire counter-intuitive principles (such as e.g. the difference between force and motion, which even in schooled adults is often a domain of uncertainty).

(iv) The spontaneous assumptions seem to constitute *cross-cultural universals*; that is to say, as far as there is evidence, that evidence bears out the hypothesis that such naïve conceptual constructions are universal (see for instance Avis & Harris 1991 on Pygmy children's theories of mind, Jeyifous 1985 on natural kinds and artefacts in Nigeria). This of course seems a direct consequence of point (iii). If such assumptions do not depend on cultural tuition, how could they differ from culture to culture?

To sum up, studies of concept acquisition seem to show that, from a very early age, a number of principles orient the subjects' attention to certain aspects of experience, and constitute the basis of quasi-theoretical intuitive principles, on which empirical knowledge can be built. Most of these specific principles remain tacit, even in adults. Such data are extremely important for a study of cultural representations, and especially of religious ideas. They make it possible to put forward a more precise cognitive account of religious transmission.

My hypothesis is that the intuitive knowledge principles described here impose constraints on the content and organisation of religious ideas. Obviously, most religious assumptions focus on objects which seemingly violate commonsense assumptions. It can be shown, however, that in order to acquire these notions, subjects have to rely, implicitly, on the intuitive principles described above. In this framework, a religious idea would be described as *cognitively optimal* if (i) it contains an explicit violation of commonsense thinking and (ii) it makes implicit use of the intuitive principles of commonsense knowledge. The hypothesis is that religious representations which are cognitively optimal will be the most recurrent ones. Being easier to learn and memorise, they would have a greater "survival value", in terms of cultural transmission, than other ideas. In the next section I will illustrate these hypotheses by describing the combination of intuitive and non-intuitive principles in the Fang case.

Social roles and intuitive principles

Let me now return to the Fang repertoire of social categories. Categories like *ngengang* (specialized healer) are connected to the umbrella concept *beyem* (persons having a magical capacity). Now the problem is that, as I said above, there is very little explicit discourse or implicit suggestions as to exactly what constitutes the difference between *beyem* and other people. The identification of a person as a *beyem* is based on two types of general features. There is, on the one hand, a series of observable traits, like the fact that a person is said to have undergone a certain initiation, that he or she performs certain rituals, etc. These elements, however, are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for judging that someone is a *beyem*. People who do not have these traits are sometimes said to be *beyem*, and some persons who perform the rituals are not said to be *beyem*. The idea that a person is a *beyem* is based on the assumption that he or she has “something more” than the superficial features, something that all members of those categories have. No one can represent what it consists of, but it has to be there, otherwise, whatever one’s activities, one is not an exemplar of the category. External typical criteria are just indirect (and insufficient) evidence of the fact that people really belong to the category. This “essentialist” interpretation of the group of *beyem* makes it possible to understand both the vagueness of people’s statements about what makes *beyem beyem*, and the idea that any particular person either is or else is not one.

These features of the category “beyem” led me to put forward the hypothesis that such categories are represented in the same way as certain natural kind terms (Boyer 1990: 101-105, forthcoming (b)). The representation and use of a natural kind term always involves two types of general assumptions: (i) some assumptions about the *typical features* of the exemplars of the kind. Although most of these features are present in most exemplars, they are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions; (ii) the presumption of an *underlying trait* that is common to all exemplars of the kind (Schwarz 1979 *passim*).

It is important to stress that the implicit assumption is about the *existence* of an underlying trait, not about what it consists of. Few

people except biologists bother to represent what makes giraffes giraffes, although everyone does suppose that there is some such underlying trait. This implicit hypothesis is a necessary aspect of the everyday use of natural kind terms. The idea of an undefined common essence is a powerful cognitive mechanism, universally available to human minds; together with basic principles of taxonomic ordering, it organizes biological knowledge in all cultures (see Atran 1987 *passim*). There is good experimental evidence that the assumption of an underlying essence, together with the idea that typical traits are, precisely, only typical, is involved in the representation of living kinds at the earliest stages of cognitive development (Medin & Ortony 1989).

As I observed above, the features mentioned as typical of *beyem* do not constitute necessary and sufficient conditions for membership. At the same time, however, people suppose that there is some underlying feature that is common to all persons in the position. In other words, there is a presumption that persons occupying a certain position share an essence, although what the essence consists of is left undefined. People who are *beyem* are thus considered *naturally* different from others. In other words, the representation of the position seems to be based on the extension to social differences of spontaneous assumptions which prove extremely successful in dealing with the natural world.

To sum up, my contention here is that the way people acquire and represent the categories denoting certain types of position is very similar to the way they acquire and represent certain categories about the natural world. To be more specific, certain crucial assumptions spontaneously applied to natural discontinuities, concerning e.g. the presence of an unobservable essence or the plausibility of instance-based generalisations, are directly applied to those social domains.

In the domain of religious positions, we find a set of ideas which have no natural referent; nor are they the object of any explicit tuition. My first claim is that, in such cases, the transmission process is in part assured by the fact that subjects spontaneously apply to the material at hand some assumptions which are highly salient in natural domains. My second claim is that the representation of certain religious positions as the consequence of inherent, unobser-

vable natural properties has a very high “survival potential”, as it were, precisely because it makes use of assumptions carried over from core knowledge.

Many social categories related to religious performance seem to be construed in a way that is similar to the Fang *beyem*, that is, with an “essentialist” hypothesis. People know that the persons included in the category (shamans, priests, diviners, etc.) are actually different from the others, although they tend to take external criteria, like the performance of certain rituals, as only symptomatic of the underlying difference. This does not mean, obviously, that all social categories to do with religious performance are implicitly conceived as quasi-biological. The biological analogy is only a particularly salient way of expressing a deeper, “essentialist” principle, following which the difference between members of the category and other people must be postulated, cannot be observed, and usually is not reducible to external criteria. Also, this essentialist hypothesis makes it possible to understand the fact that in many groups, the idea of a transformation is absurd, as far as such religious social categories are concerned. For instance, take the case of a Fang diviner, who for some reason does not manage to convince people of his genuineness, and is subsequently declared to be a non-*beyem*. No-one in such a case would ever think that the person in question first was a *beyem* and then lost that quality. They would assume that the person had been a non-*beyem* all along, and wrongly identified as a *beyem*.

Surprisingly, there is very little reliable data on the ways in which social categories are actually represented, for instance on the way people interpret those revisions and re-identifications which inevitably happen in any social group. Because of the scarcity of data, it is difficult to evaluate the general relevance of the hypothesis of “social essentialism” put forward here. It is particularly difficult to understand in what way essential hypotheses can be combined with formal criteria for membership, for instance in churches, where there exist formal criteria for priesthood. The question, whether such institutional criteria as ordination actually represented by members of a congregation as sufficient conditions for membership of the social category *PRIEST*, is a moot one. Most studies of doctrinal religions take explicit theologies as their main

object, and neglect to examine to what extent those theologies are congruent with people's actual representations. In the absence of such data, however, the hypothesis of social essentialism provides at least an example of the type of result a cognitive study of religious roles may lead to, even if in this case the relevance of the hypothesis may be limited to traditional, non-scriptural religious systems.

IV

COGNITIVE SALIENCE

Let me now turn to the organizing principles of the conceptual structures developed. As I mentioned above, anthropological descriptions often take it for granted that religious ideas invariably come in a *theoretical* format. It appears, however, that the sets of representations concerned cannot really be called "theoretical", unless one has a rather metaphorical understanding of that term. To return to our example, the Fang ideas about ritual specialists (*beyem* for instance) are not really integrated in a theoretical format, for all the reasons listed above. For one thing, they are not consistent and they come in different formats (some ideas are about singular occurrences and others about general principles, etc.). Differences between "theories" and the type of conceptual structures we are focusing on, can be apprehended in terms either epistemic or cognitive. From an epistemic viewpoint, some anthropologists have pointed out that the "theoretical" format is singularly inappropriate to a description of religious beliefs. Sperber for instance (1982 *passim*) contends that describing such ideas in terms of propositional attitudes is misleading, in that the objects of belief are not amenable to a propositional description. They can be called "semi-propositional" representations, in that they provide only fragmentary elements of propositional identification. Here, however, I will leave aside these epistemic questions and focus on the cognitive aspects of religious conceptual structures. In many respects, their most salient characteristics make the "theoretical" description rather inadequate. Here I will insist on an aspect that is generally ignored in anthropological models, namely the *conjectural* nature of these assumptions.

Induction and uncertainty

The conjectural nature of religious ideas is often a direct consequence of the way they are produced. The identification of social roles, for instance, inasmuch as it is based on assumptions of shared essence, naturally leads to the fact that every singular identification is a conjecture. Categories are thought to denote intrinsic differences between kinds or sorts of people. That such underlying differences exist is taken as true. That they apply to particular people *hic et nunc* is necessarily a matter of conjectures and non-demonstrative inferences. That the person really occupies the position in question (i.e., really has the natural properties posited) is only the most plausible conclusion, given the observable properties at hand, but corrections and re-identifications are always possible, and do in fact happen. The Fang who re-identify someone as not being a *ngengang* would say that although the person did have the relevant surface features, he/she was not really a *ngengang* from the beginning. The main point here is that there is no possibility to tell the difference on the basis of external, observable differences. And since there are no such differences, deciding one way or another is a matter of corrigible guesses and inferences.

That religious ideas command variable commitment is a commonplace of religious anthropology. Every anthropologist knows from experience that even the most basic tenets of religious systems may be represented as extremely convincing conjectures rather than intuitively obvious facts. Another aspect of this question, however, is less often commented on, namely the fact that, in any cultural environment, there is a constant competition between alternative religious interpretations of any event or state of affairs. Even in simple cases where only one religious framework is available, that framework inevitably leaves considerable latitude in the interpretation of any single event. A consequence is that, in most circumstances, any subject is provided with several interpretative schemes, the difference between which is a matter of plausibility or “naturalness”. For instance, the societies where illness is interpreted as the result of malevolent human witchcraft invariably have alternative etiological schemes, linking illness e.g. to purely contingent somatic disorders, to some powerful god’s

intervention, etc. The only way of explaining why a certain causal scheme is (conjecturally) taken as relevant in a particular case is to explain what makes it intuitively more natural. A description of the acquisition and fixation of religious assumptions must take into account the fact that there are intuitively obvious differences in certainty between thoughts; moreover, those differences are not immutable, they may and do evolve. Thoughts may become more (or less) intuitively plausible after certain processing episodes. These aspects are crucial for the acquisition and representation of religious ideas.

Cognitive salience

It seems difficult to account for the transmission of the latter type of conceptual structures without some precise notion of *cognitive salience*. The point of such a notion would be (i) to give a more precise formulation of the intuitions concerning partial credal states, i.e. states in which a belief is held only partially, (ii) to provide an account of the strengthening (and weakening) of commitment, and (iii) to describe the type of conceptual structures that are based on assumptions of variable salience. Here, obviously, I cannot give a full-blown formulation of such a framework. Rather, I will try to give a more detailed description of the “brief” which a theory of cognitive salience would have to fulfill.

Some notion of degree of commitment has always been a necessary ingredient in theories of subjective probability (cf. for instance Ramsey 1931, Carnap 1950). In such theories, having a partial commitment to a proposition “p” means believing that the probability of “p” being true is $1/x$, where $x < 1$. Such models, however, do not necessarily provide a good model for degrees of belief, or even for actual inductive reasoning.⁸ The salience of an assumption should be approached in terms that link subjective intuitions of credal states to functional properties of the assumption. Such models are available, for instance in the “framework for induction” put forward by Holland *et al.* (1986). The main consequence of such models is to define the cognitive salience of an assumption as the objective probability of its activation, given a

certain set of conditions, notably given that a certain set of other representations are already activated.

We cannot explain the actual transmission and fixation of cultural representations without a framework for cognitive salience. This should be so designed as to provide a precise account of the interaction of two types of mechanisms in the construction of conceptual structures. First, some assumptions are directly imported from intuitive knowledge, and are often domain-specific assumptions. Second, the material provided by any cultural environment provides the input for mechanisms of strengthening-weakening which are not domain-specific. They concern the general effects of confirmation, refutation and revision on the salience of assumptions.

V

FINAL REMARKS

To sum up, I have put forward in this paper a series of hypotheses that constitute only tentative elements of a cognitive framework for the explanation of religious ideas. The first one is that the main point of a cognitive approach is to account for the recurrence of non-trivial properties of religious representations. Although this goal has often been misconstrued in anthropological research, it is now becoming increasingly clear that we must take into account important findings and hypotheses of psychology and cognitive science, in order to go beyond the present state of anthropological descriptions. Another assumption is that we cannot understand the transmission of religious ideas if we do not take into account the functional specificities of different types of mental representations. A third hypothesis is that intuitive knowledge structures impose constraints on religious representations. More precisely, if religious representations combine explicit violations of some intuitive principles, and implicit confirmation of other intuitive principles, then they are cognitively optimal. This means that they are more likely to be acquired, stored and transmitted than representations which do not include this particular combination of violated and confirmed assumptions. A final hypothesis is

that the processes whereby religious ideas are made intuitively plausible to human minds are inductive processes of belief-fixation, which cannot be studied unless we have precise models of the strengthening of non-demonstrative inferences.

The main point of this paper was to show that recent advances in experimental psychology, notably in the field of conceptual development, can throw light on the processes whereby subjects develop intuitive understandings of religious notions, even in contexts where cultural transmission is fragmentary. Obviously, it is not possible to decide on the validity of such hypotheses, on the sole basis of the type of data produced in ordinary anthropological fieldwork. The various forms of "participant observation", intuitive hypothesis-testing and informal interview techniques favoured by anthropologists constitute an indispensable grounding for the study of religious representations. However, they are not designed to provide the kind of fine grain description of mental representation that is the necessary prerequisite of a cognitive study. This will probably require a different mode of data-gathering, in which traditional fieldwork methods are completed with more constrained experimental studies. Such experimental studies may not solve all the traditional problems of the anthropology of religion. They will, however, provide a precise answer to a long-neglected question, that of the processes whereby certain types of ideas are made "natural" and intuitively obvious to human subjects in different cultural settings.

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¹ As Keesing points out, the cultural models described in modern cognitive anthropology "comprise the domain of (culturally constructed) common sense. They serve pragmatic purposes. They explain the tangible, the experiential [...] the probable" (1987: 374).

² See Boyer 1990: ch. 1, Lawson & McCauley 1990: 32-44, Boyer forthcoming (a) for detailed treatments of these questions.

³ The hypotheses presented in this paper constitute a summary of the main points of Boyer forthcoming (c).

⁴ See Morris 1987 for a detailed survey of anthropological theories of religion. Lawson & McCauley (1990: 122-123) give a succinct description of the three types

of universals (substantive, formal and functional) that can be posited in a cognitive theory.

⁵ This approach, of course, is not really new in anthropological theory, and the intellectual prestige of Darwinian theory led to many models of cultural evolution based on some notion of selection, before and after Tylor's famous statement that "to the ethnographer, the bow and arrow is a species" (Tylor 1871[I]: 7). See Ghiselin (1973 *passim*) and Ingold (198: 33-47) for an analysis of these theories and the multiple misunderstandings they often produced.

⁶ See for instance Harris & Heelas 1979 for a general survey of the ambiguities in the psychological implications of descriptions couched in terms of "collective representations", and Boyer 1987 for a discussion of the problems generated by such descriptions in the study of cultural transmission.

⁷ The anthropological literature on religious ideas is of course more diverse, although the point generally holds (see Boyer 1987 *passim* for a detailed argument). For examples of monographs that take into account the "fragmentedness" or incompleteness of the input, see e.g. Keesing 1982, Toren 1987, 1988.

⁸ There is no space here to review the vast literature on inductive belief-fixation and the various problems generated by the application of "inductive logics" to actual reasoning. See Nisbett & Ross (1980) for a description of the "vividness" phenomena which make it necessary to have some notion of cognitive salience. Kahnemann, Slovic and Tversky eds. (1982) is a classical source on non-logical heuristics in the evaluation of subjective probabilities, and Osherson *et al.* (1986) on the relevance of such problems for argumentation theory. Holland *et al.* (1986) give a survey of the literature and put forward a detailed framework, from which most of my remarks are inspired.

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YOU SHALL NOT KILL.
HIERARCHIES OF NORMS IN ANCIENT ROME¹

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Summary

Different kinds of norms regulate the problem of killing in Rome, custom and law being the most important of them. This survey is extended by an analysis of the exceptions to the general ban on killing: capital punishment, killing in sacred contexts and in war. Religion plays a specific legitimizing role in offering models of killing as well as in enciphering hierarchic structures of the Roman society. Stories like the one of the Horatii (Dion. H. 3,12-22) offer an insight into the processes of legitimization and their changing patterns. Furthermore, *exempla* literature is an important instrument of reflecting—and teaching—the solution of conflicts of norms by narrative hierarchization.

1 Horatii (Dion. H. 3, (2-) 12-22)

1.1 It is war.—Romans and Albans hold their positions for weeks, but they do not want to fight. They are tired of war and they know that a coalition of enemies is waiting to attack any victor and to remove his supremacy. As in Augustan times Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports these incidents of the regal time, a federation is agreed upon. Despite a lot of arguing however, there is no agreement about to whom the leadership shall belong. To bring the dispute to an end they decide to resolve the matter in a duel. Since the Alban leader rejects a duel of the commanders, they decide that the duel will be conducted by three pairs of fighters.

Highly qualified volunteers are numerous. The Alban leader takes refuge by appealing to “heavenly” criteria. Two sets of triplets of the same age present a clear choice. Their mothers, twins themselves, have been married to a Roman, Horatius, and an Alban, Curiatius. Starting conditions could not be more equal. Their military feats qualify them as well. The proposal suppresses dissent and is accepted by all. However, the Roman leader points out the close relationships. They are cousins. Any blood guilt would be with the commanders. The objection is turned down. The Alban

triplet definitely consents, the Roman brothers demand to consult their father beforehand. He does not wish to decide, but is happy to hear about the positive decision of his sons, who do not want to appear less courageous than their Alban cousins. Glory is to be preferred over kinship.

I shall omit details of the slaughter that follows. Suffice it to say that one, Horatius, alone survives. He takes the spoils of his dead cousins and hurries towards Rome, towards his father. Outside the city gates he spots his sister. It is not correct to leave the house, but the love to her brothers, he presumes, might excuse this behavior. Far from true! Betrothed to one of the Alban Curatii, perceiving her gifts as spoils in the hands of the triumphant brother, she bewails her fiancée's death and curses her brother. He stops her protestations with his sword; a noble deed, as seen by the father. The father declines any funeral, fulfills his vows for the son and organizes a banquet. The whole army, in fact the whole city, is feasting. Soon, however, some important citizens denounce the killing of the girl as producing blood guilt, a killing without due process. The anger of the gods is imminent. The father denies any guilt. The killing was a punishment, which a father could inflict. The king does not know what to do. Even the acquittal by the people cannot overcome the religious scruples. The solution is provided by the priesthood of the *pontifices*. They apply the lustral ritual, usual, as Dionysius tells us, for unintentional killing: Sacrifices are performed and Horatius is lead through an arch called *tigillum sororium*—the etiological point of reference of the whole story.

1.2 The legend does not convey reliable information about early Roman history, but it tells us a great deal about attitudes towards killing:

- Killing is no problem in war.
- It is to be minimized between allied states, but even here it is a legitimate form of producing a decision.
- In war, the commander has to order to kill, he is the one who takes the responsibility, which might become “guilt” under special circumstances.
- Kinship is a hindrance to kill, even across borders.

— The *pater familias* is the highest judge of his family, he might even inflict capital punishment on his children.

— Religion might make killing both a problem and provide religious rites to remove such problems.

I shall try to analyze these observations within a systematic frame of reference.

2 “*You shall not kill!*” — Norms concerning killing in Roman morals

2.1 A theory of norms starts with a description of the different kinds of norms, their respective claims to authority, their patterns of legitimation and sanction, and the corresponding institutions. This approach defines society as a whole as the object of research.² Thereby it is possible to analyze the range of religious influences within a larger cultural frame.³ “Ethics”, then, is defined as a developed form of systematized reflection on human action. It is identical neither with religion nor with the “morality”. The latter is used to address the sum of ethically relevant (this is defined by one’s own preconception) norms and institutions controlling human action. The fundamental concept is the term “norm” as defined by Wilhelm Korff: “Norms are regulations of human interpreting, organizing and arranging; their claim to authority provides the occasion for acceptance, consent and obedience.”⁴

2.2 Already in the early Republic, the norms of the “Twelve tables” show positive, formulated law. They do not only allow or forbid but also define sanctions and their institutional guarantees. As a body of law they dominate the jurisdiction of the Republic; jurisprudence is dominated even longer. Lawful killing is defined by this early collection of laws, for example in self-defence against a thief (*XII tab.* 8.12 f.) or in eliminating deformed children (4.1). There is, furthermore, a procedure for offering compensation in the case of negligent killing (8.24a). In several cases capital punishment is fixed or the “cursing” (*sacratio capitis*), that lifts the control on killing. However, as seen by Cicero, capital punishment is applied to very few crimes. Every lawyer of imperial times would have agreed, knowing the long catalogue of punishable crimes of his own time.⁵ Execution is legal only after condemnation (9.6). There is no

regulation concerning murder: capital punishment is not fixed before a *lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis*, a Sullan law on murder and poisoning of 80 B.C. This law, however, does not aim at private conflicts but at public security.⁶ The sanction is certainly older. Already Romulus is said to have regarded premeditated killing as murder (*parricida*), even if the Greek authority, Plutarch, wonders at the missing sanction.⁷ Plutarch's astonishment is not necessary. The missing explicit sanction is just an example of the close connection of law to the second fundamental section of norms: custom. This is a phenomenon found in many societies.

2.3 Custom comprises norms which regulate large areas of human action by general practise and group pressure. By the time of the Twelve tables they are not different from laws either in contents or by their claim to authority.⁸ By the Republican tradition they are often formulated as *leges regiae*, laws of regal times. The *pater familias* is allowed to kill his son (Dion. H. 2.26.4) or his wife, if she has committed adultery or drunk wine (2.25.6). If somebody has sold his wife, he shall be sacrificed to the lower gods (Plut. *Rom.* 22.4). Those assaulting their parents or mothers-in-law will become *sacer* (cursed), likewise anybody who digs out a boundary stone (Dion. H. 2.74.3). In particular, "custom" regulates life within the *familia*. This is a quasi-autonomous jurisdictional unit practicing sanctions as severe as capital punishment.

Law develops into a separated system by the institutionalization of courts and the establishment of an order of jurists since the second century B.C. This process is not furthered by the development of police forces, unknown to the Republic.⁹ Even then, for the most parts, reasons for legal norms are given by referring to existent norms. They are differentiated from custom which is responsible for the generally valid ban on killing. Such a prohibition must be assumed on general anthropological grounds.¹⁰ Implicitly the ban is visible in the Twelve tables, which regulate the permission of killing in special cases.

2.4 The harsh disapproval of new group morals, of people with different sets of norms, demonstrates the functioning of custom.

Such groups quickly arouse suspicion that they fall short of the high standards of loyalty and predictability expected in Roman social behavior. Disapproval is articulated by political leaders in terms of “inner security”. These politics have consequences: Nightly gatherings are prohibited in advance (*XII tab.* 8.26), new religious groups, adherents of Bacchus or Isis for instance, are to be suppressed, the supposedly Pythagorean books of Numa are burnt, Greek philosophers or astrologians are expelled.¹¹

2.5 Even for the societies of classical antiquity “fashion” as “temporary custom” should not be ignored.¹² Without a closer analysis of the underlying political and conceptual constellations the use of the term “fashion” certainly implies a deficit, but such a description of the phenomena on the levels of norms is useful for systematic analysis. Examples are differences concerning the frequency of certain crimes. Politically motivated murder comes “into fashion” during the last third of the second century B.C. There are differences in how offences are prosecuted and punished. Capital punishment gets “out of fashion” during the last fifty years of the Republic: the outcry is correspondingly loud when the Catilinarians were executed. Only in the regime of Augustus does it become fashionable again. The military running the gauntlet, however, (*fustuarium*), ending always with the death of the offender, remains outdated. Its application by exceptionally tough generals like Lucius Apronius is the more effective.¹³

2.6 Any, even rudimentary, ethical formulation of “life” as a value, corresponding with the ban on killing, is missing, likewise the corresponding value attitude (virtue) of “preserving life”. Regarding the many exceptions to the ban, we should not expect such a value or value attitude. “Life”, taken as individual existence, is not significant.¹⁴ It is important only instrumentally. The general has to survive his victory to earn the glory: The hero’s death of antiquity is a Greek, not a Roman invention.¹⁵ The owner’s property is damaged, if his slave is killed. There is no discussion of “fundamental values” in Rome, despite all reminiscences to be found in Cicero or the Stoic tradition.¹⁶ Within a theory of norms “fundamental values” should not be understood

in terms of their contents but their function. It is not sufficient that for some values absolute authority is claimed. Instead, a canon, a supposedly complete and irreducible system of values of super-positive validity must be formulated. Its reformulation as positive law (human rights) is on demand. Usually such a process occurs in pluralistic societies characterized by increasingly incompatible morals.¹⁷

3 “*You shall kill*”—*The social construction of the exceptions*

It is at the place of execution and on the battlefield that killing is not only accepted but demanded by society or its political representative. Nevertheless, what seems to be without problems in one sector of norms, may be troublesome in another. The story of Horatius demonstrates that with regard to kinship. The analysis of the constitutional and ritual construction of the exceptions to the fundamental ban on killing above the level of *familia* may help to see how the hierarchization of conflicting norms is working.

3.1 The most famous Roman form of execution, the crucifixion, is only exceptionally applied on Roman citizens. In general, and especially during the Republic, it is used for slaves and foreigners.¹⁸ Besides hanging, which is mentioned in the Twelve tables for a few crimes, beheading was the usual method. Historical examples, however, are not available for the Republic. The ritual (not necessarily sacral) apparatus is worth noticing. In contrast to Greece¹⁹ the execution of Roman citizens takes place in the public in the classical construction.²⁰ A signal of fanfares invites the community. The place of executions is outside the *pomerium*. In his speech for Rabirius Cicero names the *campus Martius*. He deals, however, with an exceptional situation. Sources from the empire indicate a place outside of the Porta Capena.²¹ The execution proper is preceded by a flagellation with rods. This element is to be interpreted as a “sacral supplementary punishment”.²² During the Republic, it is never used as a punishment in itself,²³ but regularly occurs before executions and as punishment for Vestals.²⁴ The act of killing probably was accomplished by lictors under the supervision of the *tresviri capitales*.²⁵ The delinquent is beheaded with an axe

carried by the lictors as a symbol of the magistrates' power (at least outside Rome). As Gladigow remarks, "in the Mediterranean world the axe ... is the sacral weapon par excellence ... the instrument of legitimate killing".²⁶

Three points should be noticed:

a) The large apparatus to stage-manage the execution has already been mentioned.

b) The place lies outside the sacral borderline of the city (*pomerium*): Here the executioner has to dwell; executions in military camps take place outside the walls as well.²⁷

c) The act is politically safeguarded by publicity and the legitimation of the acting figures. The *capitales* are elected by the people, the lictors are directly dependent on the highest magistrates, who themselves are elected likewise.

In contrast to, or analogy with, other forms of execution this element of political legitimation very clearly shows the central principles of construction. We may compare the late Republican reflecting²⁸ on the throwing down of delinquents from the Tarpeian rock. In principle this is thought as a form of private self-help.²⁹ In the public arena it is used by those magistrates that have no administrative personnel, namely the tribunes of the people. They have to throw down the delinquents with their own hand from that edge of the Capitoline hill which faces away from the city.³⁰ The executions of at least elevated members in a society which in its coherence is as precarious as the Roman needs a maximum of institutional and staged consent. Wherever this is missing, executions cannot be performed except secretly: by strangulation in the dungeon.³¹ Understandably such executions are affected by the odium of political murder. This is true for Cicero's handling of the Catilina affair—and he had to pay for it once his majority was lost. The same holds true for the emperors. Due to their military power they can afford it: The statal terror of the dictatorship is able to (temporarily) establish an "internal security" the Republic was incapable of producing.³² In contrast to the execution of Roman citizens, slaves or prisoners-of-war are eliminated by a contemptible *carnifex* or—with a new apparatus—lacerated in an amphitheater for the entertainment and solidarization of the society which takes its seats according to ranks.³³ The military execution

of citizens—soldiers beheading with swords, officers demanding suicide—is part of the general militarization of the society. It demonstrates the emperor's monopoly on punishment³⁴ as well as his basis of power—the army.

3.2 A special form of executions are those cases in which the religious system itself demands the killing. All the three cases which might be thought of can be shown to be constructed as exceptions.

a) The elimination of hermaphrodites or deformed children is demanded for the procuration of prodigies in several instances. In the Roman view it is applied to beings who might be killed because of the father's right to decide on the life of his children anyway. To expose these persons to the sea even avoids a direct act of killing.

b) The execution of the *virgines Vestales* as well as of their "seducer" is construed as the family business of the Pontifex Maximus. He flagellates the male offender with his own hands and within the *pomerium* till death. This form of execution is not known otherwise.³⁵ To bury the female alive at the inner border of the *pomerium* again avoids a visible act of killing.

c) This would hold true for the only attested human sacrifices of the Republic if they could be proved historically. Pairs of Celts and Greeks are said to have been buried alive.³⁶ Furthermore—and more important for our line of thought—the victims are foreigners. The Roman society can imagine sacrifices of members only in prehistoric times (transformed by now) or by volunteers.³⁷

3.3 Killing in war produces a double problem. In order to destroy the enemy the Roman participants must be allowed to kill. On the other hand this excessive slaughtering must not affect their own society.³⁸ Furthermore the commander must have the right to discipline his troops even by capital punishment to guarantee the instrumentality of the army without any restrictions. Thereby all the civil rights valid in Rome, especially the right to "provocation" against a death sentence, the right to appeal to the people, is rendered naught. This is accomplished in three ways.³⁹

a) *Domi*, the city of Rome especially within the *pomerium*, and *militiae*, the area of martial law outside of Rome, are differentiated

by a bundle of rituals and regulations. Outside, most of those institutions that compensate for magisterial power are missing.

b) The soldier is not allowed to kill by the simple fact of being drafted. He is enabled to do this by the military oath (*sacramentum*) only, which binds him to the commander in absolute obedience.⁴⁰ He is not *allowed* to kill, but *must* kill if ordered to do so.

c) The radical dependence on the commander is reflected by sumptuous rituals of legitimation, departure and arrival. They are focussed on his person and help to define his exceptional position. In a most visible way this is demonstrated by the triumph: The leader of the enemy has to go just in front of the commander's cart. As soon as the procession and the triumphator reach the bottom of the Capitol hill the captured leaders are led to the *Tullianum*, a subterranean dungeon nearby. There they are strangled.⁴¹ The triumphator does not start to ascend to the Capitol until the execution is reported. Only then do sacrificing and feasting start. The unusual method of killing and the "timing" within the complex ritual reveal the intention. The anonymity of the executioner and the invisibility of the act of killing are coordinated with the visible stop of the triumphator: It is this human Iuppiter who is staged as the author of the act. This is not conceived as responsibility, but power (*imperium*) and glory (*gloria*).

4 The rôle of religion

The examples suggest a summary of the rôle of religion for the system of Roman morals in five paragraphs.

a) Roman religion does not directly take part in a discourse on killing.⁴²

b) As has been shown for the commander, religion offers legitimation, which in the case of killing exceeds its general performance for all magistrates.

c) For special forms of overriding the ban on killing, e.g. executions, a ritual framework is offered. Its legitimizing and controlling function, however, should not be exaggerated.⁴³ Neither beheading nor fighting are sacral acts, sacrifices.⁴⁴ The same holds true for the mass slaughter in the amphitheaters. Occasion and framework are sacral, we are talking about *ludi*, games, i.e. complex rituals for a

god, a *divus* or *genius*. The killing itself, however, is not understood as a sacrifice. Usually, it is not performed as a simple execution but organized as a competition, as bloody as possible, or as a mythological scene implying a deadly end.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, on the whole the executions draw on forms of mythical killings or on the religious and legitimate killing of animals.

d) By classifying certain events as prodigies⁴⁶ which might demand the elimination of human beings for a ritual “procuration”, Republican Roman religion helps to constitute a “moral community”. By pronouncing who might be endangered by the anger of the gods, religion defines the generally obliging morals as group morals.⁴⁷ Any orientation that directly appeals to individual action is not given. The group morals of the so-called oriental religions, which originate or spread in the Roman empire, will achieve this. In contrast to Roman⁴⁸ religion, they can employ the incentives of a personal soteriology.⁴⁹

e) The close relationship of religion and social structure, of law and custom, is demonstrated by the *sacer-esto*-formula, a curse declaring someone outlawed. This formula is tied to crimes that affect fundamental social relationships: a husband selling his wife (Plut. *Rom.* 22, see above); a child beating his parents or parents-in-law (Fest. 260.7-11 L); a patron harming his client (Serv. *Aen.* 6.609); a neighbor digging up a boundary post (Dion. H. 2.74.3); and—beyond the time of the Twelve tables—a patrician directly or indirectly eliminating a tribune of the people (Liv. 3.55). The society acknowledges how serious such crimes are. It declares the delinquent *sacer*, i.e. property of a god in terms of sacral law. As it is practiced in animal sacrifice, the property might be transferred by killing.⁵⁰ Everybody is allowed to kill the *homo sacer* without fear of punishment. However, there is no positive legal qualification for such an act (*fas*). It is even excluded by the wording of the regulation. Any adhortation of private killing or official prosecution is lacking.⁵¹ Thus it is difficult to build a theory of sacrifice as the original form of execution on this evidence. Normally, the offender would not be killed. In all the cases the harmed one is in an inferior position: wife; old parents; client; a small neighbor, threatened by the hunger for land of a person with power; the *plebs*, whose representative has been murdered. In such conflicts only, the defi-

nition of the norm would be comprehensible if we keep in mind that the Roman legal system is based on self-help. The laws are intended to guarantee a sort of social security. They are valid even if they could not be enforced. Powerful persons are integrated by Roman society, they are appealed to, but not fought. Judging by the restrictive use of capital punishment by the Twelve tables, the discrepancy between the seriousness of the offence and the punishment in these cases is high. It demonstrates that the killing by the harmed one (and nobody else would be interested) is not really intended. The legal trick of the *sacer esto*, i.e. to define a massive, automatically valid punishment,⁵² enables society to express fundamental values even where law is suppressed by power and to do this without risking civil war.

5 The example of the *Horatii*

5.1 The Latin version of the legend by Livy (1.24-26) and the Greek by Dionysius of Halicarnassus differs but in details. These include a point of paramount interest, the piacular sacrifice for murder. Dionysius conceives of it as a lustration (3.22.6). The model is taken from the myth of Orestes rather than any cultic reality of Greece.⁵³ In fact, he declares it to be a standard institution for unintentional killing in Rome. But there is no trace of such a lustration whatsoever. We only find the offer of a ram to the relatives of the victim.⁵⁴ Nor is there a trace in Livy. He speaks of an *expiatio* or *piaculum*, a piacular sacrifice. This, however, is the father's business (and turns into a tradition of the *gens*, 1.26.12 f.). It is not the business of the official Roman religion.⁵⁵

5.2 Apart from these differences Livy and Dionysius show a remarkable common trait in their discussion of the piacular sacrifice. This must be due to a common model, probably written by the annalist Valerius Antias in Sullan times. The connection of the triple duel and the murder of the sister and lustral rites is hardly more ancient. It is part of the bloody political struggle since the times of the Gracchi.

This dating of the legend⁵⁶ could be argued only summarizingly. The story of the triplets' duell might exist even without the motif of the

murder of the sister. Aitiologically, then, it would motivate the epithet *Trigeminus*, borne by some Curiatii.⁵⁷ Furthermore, as Dionysius reports (3.22.10), it motivates a law ordering the public alimentation of growing up triplets. The original core of the legend depends on the Curiatii only. The motif of the triplet's duel with the Horatii is logically, although not necessarily chronologically, secondary. Horatius Cocles, one of the most eminent examples of Roman virtue, is known as a victorious warrior. Therefore it is difficult to imagine a victor of the Curiatii's and Horatii's duel other than a Horatius. But this is explicitly denied by Livy. In his introduction of the episode he reports of the contradictoriness of his sources as far as the ethnological origin of the families is concerned (1.24.1). Thus inconsistency with regard to the victors is implied, too.⁵⁸ The tradition on the duel is neither for certain ancient nor solid.⁵⁹

What political interests might lurk behind the legend? The Horatii were politically important families during the first half of the fifth century. The only direct conflict with the consul Marcus Horatius Barbatus and Lucius Valerius Potitus opposed a prolongation of the consular power of the *decemviri legis scribundis*: Publius Curiatius Fistus Trigeminus is known to have been one of them in 451.⁶⁰ Thereafter the Curiatii are seen as representatives of the plebeians with a Publius being a tribune of the people in 401 B.C. Nevertheless both of the families must not be judged archetypical representatives in the conflict of orders. Important laws defending the tribunate bear the name of Horatii, *leges Valeriae Horatiae*.

It is in the times of the Gracchi that the legend is plausible as an instrument of political struggle. There are no patrician Horatii any longer, but their glory is alive. On the other side the patrician background of the Curiatii has fallen into oblivion. The plebeian family is politically active, namely the tribune of 138 B.C., Caius Curiatius, an abominable person for every patrician (see Cic. leg. 3.20). Now the pairing (and the victor) is interesting—and disputed. The introduction of a Sicinus as ancestor of the mother demonstrates the party interests in the ongoing process of reworking the tale. By his staying in Alba he is in particular connected with the Curiatii. The Sicinii clearly belong to the plebeian-tribunician part, by the time of the Horatii as well as at the end of the Sullan era (Cn. Sicinus). The moral disqualification of the

defeated Curiatii, who had shown no regard to kinship characterizes the version of Dionysius.

The plebeian-popular party would not have appreciated this patrician-senatorial⁶¹ version of the legend. But this new version did not simply change winners and losers. The senatorial party drove home its point even further. Perhaps inspired by the epitheton *Curiatius* of the god Janus (which might have been used to prove the priority of the Curiatii in Rome), they came upon the *tigillum sororium*. If *Ianus Curiatius* denotes one part of the victims, *Iuno Sororia* serves to construe the other, the killed sister (*soror*). This is the step most interesting for the historian of religion. The battlefield is not the only place to justify the killing of one's own blood. Not only cousins in war, but even a sister in peace might be killed *under particular circumstances*. The particularity of the circumstances cannot be discussed in legal terms, but in terms of public interests and prestige. Religion legitimates the superseding of law. The arch of the *tigillum* serves for a lustration *ad cautelam* only. To put it in another way, the common weal is more important than the individual welfare. This is a maxim practiced on the Gracchi just shortly before. It is this version, reduced to the optimistic point of view, which is preserved by the tradition.

Valerius Antias handed down, perhaps completed,⁶² the process. He is writing for his patrons, the Valerii, and shows sympathy for Sulla.⁶³ He is interested in legends and religious material. Livy mistrusts him (see Liv. 30.19.11) but used him nevertheless. Livy excuses himself at the beginning that his "heart" will decide concerning the different versions in his sources (1.24.11). This could be a hint to Antias. The inserted treaty ceremony of the fetials certainly stems from Valerius Antias. Here, a "M. Valerius" figures as the first fetial known by name.⁶⁴ Although the whole story does not seem extremely unified, probably Antias already shows this conglomerated form. The main argument is the parallel course of action in Dionysius and Livy. It is obscured by omissions in both of them and fairly large additions by the Greek author. The conspicuous omission of the fetials in Dionysius for instance (which in Livy enable us to identify Antias) is due to the fact that in contrast to his Latin writing colleague, Dionysius has already treated the fetials in an independent, systematic chapter at the end of the preceding book. They are, how-

ever, not totally missing. Dionysius mentions the sacrifices of the oath in a *praeteritio*-formula and a short description (3.9.5; 3.18.2).

5.3 Given the dating, the legend of the Horatii and its “purification of a murderer” is part of a development that might be termed a sacralization of judicial and politically motivated murder. In its first phase, the beginning of the “Roman revolution”, the following events can be listed: the extradition of an unpopular general, put in forms of fetial law in the 130s B.C.;⁶⁵ the invention of archaic precedents of the *senatus consultum ultimum*, an instrument for the state of emergency;⁶⁶ the repetition of the burying alive of Vestals and pairs of Celts and Greeks, practiced a hundred years before in the context of the second Punic war;⁶⁷ the gladiatorial games, which have been employed by privates only for more than a century, began to be organized on an official basis. Whereas regular executions of Roman citizens fall into disuse, in a sacral framework death becomes acceptable. At the same time killing is practiced a thousandfold in civil war, proscriptions⁶⁸ and political murder.

The second phase of (often archaizing) sacralization corresponds to the second phase of the Roman revolution and the establishment of the military dictatorship termed “Principate”. The successful strategy is further improved. Political murder becomes practical by militarization and sacralization. Mass executions become a source of legitimation. Soldiers turn into hangmen. Caesar causes two mutineers to be sacrificed like the annually sacrificed “Trojan horse” (*October equus*). Many executions are sure of general agreement. These are stage-managed, legitimized by ritual and sacral forms. At the games they stage mass executions of captives, slaves or underclass criminals in military or mythological costumes, while the general public frenetically applauds and a few (like Seneca) lament, nobody resists the slaughter. The time-honoured form of individual execution is used for famous “scapegoats”, an astrologer for instance (Tac. *ann.* 2.32), less spectacularly for some of the small fry. People who are really important die inconspicuously.

5.4 Texts like the story of the Horatii are not made to legitimize just a single case. They are part of the genre of *exempla*,⁶⁹ they are

pieces transmitting norms for educational purposes. Important value-oriented attitudes are visualized in dramatic form. The traditions are usually complex. The same example may be differently told by different authors. A basic corpus of tales can be found in historiography and rhetorical reference books. Many short allusions, in oratory for example, prove the presence of these examples. Single tales need not to be retold but can be alluded to and evoked by mere names.

The transfer of norms into dramatic structures makes the presentation of conflicting norms possible. The conflict is solved by a practiced hierarchization of norms. The breaking down into sequences of action needs no systematized principles of decision. Wherever a theoretical formulation of hierarchies embracing the relevant range of norms is not possible or teachable, dramatic hierarchization is of paramount importance. Our legend gives a clear picture of the structure of this type of solution. The conflicting norms are stressed by the construction of extreme plots. Thus these norms are lifted on a level of general principles, they are independent of contingent elements of the story. Cousins fight each other, a brother kills his sister. The criteria of the decision are clearly presented: In his statement, the father of the murderer as well as victim effectively puts side by side the martial merits and their symbols and the steps of the execution. The state and its salvation come first. The people acquit the son by referring to his bravery (*virtus*), not to law (Liv. 1.26.11 f.). Livy lays stress on this fact, it is emphasized by the purifying rituals, too. Not rigorism but complexity forms the framework of this kind of moral education: The story still cares about limits. It is the sister, not the father, who is going to be killed. She dies *in front* of the gates, not within the *pomerium*. There is no royal charter for returning soldiers.

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¹ Revised version of a paper read at the congress of the German Association for the History of Religion on March 5th, 1991 at Munich. I wish to thank the participants in the discussion and especially Dr. Ch. Auffarth and Prof. B. Gladigow (Tübingen) for stimuli and criticism. I am grateful to Prof. E. T. Lawson for improvement of the English text. Remaining mistakes are mine. The following abbreviations have been used: ANRW: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neuen Forschung*, ed. by H. Temporini, W. Haase, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972-. KP: *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike*, ed. by K. Ziegler, W. Sontheimer, München: Artemis, 1964-1975 (Repr. 1979). RAC: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. by Th. Klausner, E. Dassmann et al., Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950-. RE: *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung*, ed. by G. Wissowa (Kroll, Mittelhaus, Ziegler), Stuttgart: Druckenmüller/Metzler, 1893-1980. Abbreviations of journals according to *L'année philologique*.

² Fundamental lines of the approach are to be found in the chapters on norm and institution theory by W. Korff in: A. Hertz et. al. (edd.), *Handbuch der christlichen Ethik 1*, 2nd ed. (1978), Freiburg/Gütersloh: Herder/Mohn, 1979, 108 ff., espec. 114-125. 168-176. In detail: Korff, *Norm und Sittlichkeit: Untersuchungen zur Logik der normativen Vernunft* (Tübinger Theologischen Studien 1), Mainz: Grünewald, 1973 (2nd, newly introd. ed. Freiburg: Alber, 1985); see H. Schelsky (ed.), *Zur Theorie der Institution* (Interdisziplinäre Studien 1), Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1970.

³ An attempt: F. B. Bird, "How Do Religions Affect Moralities? A Comparative Analysis", *Social Compass* 37 (1990), 291-314; a broader perspective is offered by D. Chidester, *Patterns of Action: Religion and Ethics in a Comparative Perspective*, Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1987.

⁴ *Handbuch* (n. 2), 117.

⁵ Cic. *rep.* 4.12. Capital punishment is fixed for harmful magic (8.1), clandestine harvest (8.9), grand arson (8.10), military treason (9.5) and corruption in court (9.3). Capital punishment for slaves caught in larceny (8.14) implies different punishment for different social classes, a principle characterizing imperial law. A reconstruction of the Twelve tables is presented by K. G. Bruns (ed.), *Fontes Iuris Romani antiqui*. Post curas Th. Mommseni editionibus quintae et sextae adhibitas septimum ed. O. Gradenwitz, Tübingen: Mohr, 1909, 15-40 (*Fontes*), and S. Riccobono (ed.), *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani 1: Leges*, 2nd ed., Firenze: Barbèra, 1941, 21-75 (*FIRA*).

⁶ *Fontes* 92; more exactly it is punishable to move about in arms preparing robbery or murder; see W. Kunkel, *Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des römischen Kriminalverfahrens in vorsullanischer Zeit* (Abhandlungen Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl. NF 56), München: Akademie, 1962, 64-67.

⁷ Plut. *Rom.* 22.4; see Paul. Fest. 247.19-24 L. Popular etymologies, deriving the term from *pater* or *parens*, shape the understanding in antiquity. Today, the most current etymology starts from **pāso-kaidā* (s), "murderer of a close relative" (A. Walde, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3rd newly rev. ed. by J. B. Hofmann, Heidelberg: Winter, 1938, 2.253; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. by P. G. W. Glare. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982, s.v.), but it is far from certain (A. Ernout, A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: Histoire des mots* 2, 4ième ed. rev., corr., augment. d'un index, Paris: Klincksieck, 1960, s.v.). Kunkel (n. 6), 39 f., is right to denounce the etymological approach: The institution of the *quaestores paricidii* proves that *parricidium* is to be understood as murder generally.

⁸ In general: F. Tönnies, *Die Sitte* (Die Gesellschaft 25), Frankfurt a.M.: Riklen & Loening, 1909, bes. 17; Korff, Handbuch (n. 2), 118. Max Weber's concept of custom is too restricted. It is sharply separated from customary law and thought to be without every form of sanction and authority except a disapproval not binding (*Rechtssoziologie*. From the manuscript ed. and introd. by J. Winckelmann [Soziologische Texte 2], 1960, 2nd rev. ed., Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1967, 80-96, espec. 80). If different forms of norms are accepted, the theory of punishment must be enlarged to cover phenomena outside the jurisdictional system, too. See M. Ignatieff, "State, civil society, and total institutions: A critique of recent social histories of punishment", *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research* 3 (1981), 153-192. The author challenges the view that there is something like a statal monopol of legitimate exercise of force (186).

⁹ See W. Nippel, *Aufbruch und "Polizei" in der römischen Republik*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988. See Kunkel (n. 6), 71-79, for the *tresviri capitales*.

¹⁰ See H. Kelsen, *Vergeltung und Kausalität: Eine soziologische Untersuchung*, Den Haag: Stockum, 1941, 56: In general primitive societies guarantee the life of their members by the most severe sanctions. For the ethological fundaments of the *intraspecies* inhibitions to kill see e.g. I. Eibl-Eibesfeld, *Krieg und Frieden aus der Sicht der Verhaltensforschung*, 2nd ed., München: Piper, 1986; for the history of religion the problem of lifting the inhibition has been dealt with by B. Gladigow, "Homo publice necans: Kulturelle Bedingungen kollektiven Tötens", *Saeculum* 37 (1986), 150-165 (with many bibliographical references).

¹¹ These decisions are usually interpreted within the concept of "religious policy" or "tolerance". Thereby the paradox cannot sufficiently be removed that foreign gods are introduced without any difficulty whereas their adherents are prosecuted. See H. Cancik, "Rom", in: H. Haag (ed.), *Bibellexikon*, 2nd newly rev. and enl. ed., Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1968, 1482-8; H. Nesselhauf, *Der Ursprung des Problems "Staat und Kirche"* (Konstanzer Universitätsreden 14), Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1975; J. North, "Religious toleration in Republican Rome", *PCPhS* 25 (1979), 85-103 (Bacchanalia).

¹² Korff, Handbuch (n. 2), 122 f., argues much too evolutionistically, but his concept of fashion is large enough, to cover ancient societies.—If in the following text I shall speak of the capital punishment coming "out of fashion" the inherent difficulty of any *argumentum e silentio* in periods of scarce sources should be kept in mind. Anyway, the proposition is valid for the upper echelons of society only (cf. Kunkel [n. 6], 78).

¹³ Tac. *ann.* 3.21. Tacitus' words should not be misunderstood. He approves of a severe handling of the band of soldiers. For the running of the gauntlet in early modern times see H.-M. Möller, *Das Regiment der Landsknechte: Untersuchungen zu Verfassung und Selbstverständnis in deutschen Söldnerheeren des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen 12), Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976, 234-259.

¹⁴ See Gladigow, "Naturae deus humanae mortalis: Zur sozialen Konstruktion des Todes in römischer Zeit", in: G. Stephenson (ed.), *Leben und Tod in den Religionen: Symbol und Wirklichkeit*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980, 119-133. He demonstrates this in analyzing the funeral rituals of the Republican upper class. Differences to the empire as well as to Greece are analyzed, too.

¹⁵ See C. W. Müller, "Der schöne Tod des Polisbürgers oder 'Ehrenvoll ist es, für das Vaterland zu sterben'", *Gymnasium* 96 (1989), 317-340; Rüpke, "Wege zum Töten, Wege zum Ruhm: Krieg in der römischen Republik", in: H. von

Stietencron, J. Rüpke (edd.), *Die Geschichtlichkeit des Krieges und der tötende Mensch* (forthcoming).

¹⁶ For Cicero: H.-Th. Johann, *Gerechtigkeit und Nutzen: Studien zur ciceronischen und hellenistischen Naturrechts- und Staatslehre*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1981; M. Ducos, *Les romains et la loi: Recherches sur les rapports de la philosophie grecque et de la tradition romaine à la fin de la République*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1984; K. M. Girardet, *Die Ordnung der Welt: Ein Beitrag zur philosophischen und politischen Interpretation von Ciceros Schrift de legibus* (Historia Einzelschriften 42), Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983.

¹⁷ The human rights discussion is the focus of these processes. For a historical and systematic introduction see J. Schwartländer (ed.), *Modernes Freiheitsethos und christlicher Glaube: Beiträge zur juristischen, philosophischen und theologischen Bestimmung der Menschenrechte* (Entwicklung und Frieden 24), München/Mainz: Kösel/Grünwald, 1982.

¹⁸ Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Systematisches Handbuch der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft 1.4), Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1899, 918-921 (capital punishment in general 910-944); K. Latte, "Todesstrafe", *RE* Suppl. 7 (1940), 1599-1619, see 1616. N. Hyldahl; B. Salomonsen, "Hinrichtung", *RAC* 15 (1989), 342-365, do not present anything new. Death penalty during the passage to a Christian regime is dealt with by Cancik, "Christentum und Todesstrafe: Zur Religionsgeschichte der legalen Gewalt", in: H. von Stietencron (ed.), *Angst und Gewalt: Ihre Präsenz und ihre Bewältigung in den Religionen*. Mit Beiträgen von ..., Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1979, 213-251.

¹⁹ Latte, Todesstrafe (n. 18), 1618.

²⁰ Tac. ann. 2.32: *more prisco*. With this expression Tacitus seems to emphasize a practice exceptional for the Principate. The execution of the Catilinarians was not carried through in the public: Sall. *Catil.* 55, one of the densest descriptions of such an execution: *Postquam, ut dixi, senatus in Catonis sententiam discessit, consul optimum factu ratus noctem quae instabat antecapere, ne quid eo spatio novaretur, tres viros quae supplicium postulabat parare iubet. (2) ipse praesidiis dispositis Lentulum in carcerem deducit; (3) idem fit ceteris per praetores. est in carcere locus, quod Tullianum appellatur, ubi paululum ascenderit ad laevam, circiter duodecim pedes humi depressus; (4) eum muniunt undique parietes atque insuper camera lapideis fornicibus iuncta; sed incultu tenebris odore foeda atque terribilis eius facies est. (5) in eum locum postquam demissus est Lentulus, vindices rerum capitalium, quibus praeceptum erat, laqueo gulam fregere. (6) ita ille patricius ex gente clarissima Corneliorum, qui consulare imperium Romae habuerat, dignum moribus factisque suis exitum invenit. de Cethego, Statilio, Gabinio, Caepario eodem modo supplicium sumptum est.*

²¹ Mommsen, *Strafrecht* (n. 18), 914. The formulation of the *lex regia* (Liv. 1.26.6)—... *caput obnubito, infelici arbori recte suspendito, verberato vel intra pomerium vel extra pomerium*—presupposes (against Mommsen) a place outside. This regulation is delimited only for a part of the flagellation.

²² Gladigow, "Die sakralen Funktionen der Liktoren: Zum Problem von institutioneller Macht und sakraler Präsentation", *ANRW* I.2 (1972), 295-314.

²³ Cf. M. Fuhrmann, "Verbera", *RE* Suppl. 9 (1962), 1589-97.

²⁴ Dion. H. 2.67.3; s. Mommsen, *Strafrecht* (n. 18), 919, n. 1.

²⁵ See Kunkel (n. 6), 71-79; Mommsen, *Strafrecht* (n. 18), 915, espec. n. 1: There are no direct pieces of evidence. Livy (1.26.7 f. 11) presupposes such a procedure in his description of Horatius' trial. The most important argument is provided by the rods (*fascēs*) and axe (*securis*) usually carried by the lictors as symbols of power. According to Plutarch (*Publ.* 6) the lictors of the commander afflict the

death penalty in military camps (see Rüpke, *Domi militiae: Die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990, 92, with bibliographical references). Originally the *capitales* had been appointed by the praetor. Since 242 B.C. they are elected. Within the *cursus honorum* they are part of the *vigintiviri*, the group of introductory offices. See Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer), 3rd ed., Leipzig: Hirzel, 1887, 2.1, 594-8; for the executioner (*carnifex*) 1.327 f. The importance and the large range of independent activities of the *tresviri* had been demonstrated by Kunkel against Mommsen.

²⁶ Gladigow, Liktoren (n. 22), 307, n. 84.

²⁷ Cic. *Rab. perd.* 15 (Henker); Hyg. *met. castr.* 56; cf. Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), 170, n. 39; 182.

²⁸ Cf. Mommsen, Strafrecht (n. 18), 932.

²⁹ The (infrequent) flinging down of a *virgo vestalis* by the Pontifex maximus must be put into this category: The penal relationship is construed as internal to the "family" and therefore private (see below).

³⁰ See Liv. 6.20.12; Dio 58.15.3; further references in Mommsen, Strafrecht (n. 18), 931-4.

³¹ Cf. in the description of the execution of the Catilinarians (cited in n. 20) how much haste, security and the missing publicity are stressed.

³² Caesar, who did without it after his military victory, was murdered.

³³ See K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments", *JRS* 80 (1990), 44-73. Therefore the ban on any involvement of persons of the higher echelons of society is important. It might obscure the clearcut social differences. A relevant decree of the senate of A.D. 19 is analyzed by W. D. Lebek, "Standeswürde und Berufsverbot unter Tiberius: Das SC der tabula Larinas", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 81 (1990), 37-96.

³⁴ Other forms fall into disuse or are abolished.

³⁵ See above and Gladigow, Liktoren (n. 22), 310; H. Cancik-Lindemaier, "Kultische Privilegierung und gesellschaftliche Realität: Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte der *virgines Vestae*", *Saeculum* 41 (1990), 1-16, espec. 10-12.

³⁶ See K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 5.4), München: Beck, 1960, 256 f. Latte points to possible relations with the Vestals' "incests". Comprehensive: F. Schwenn, *Das Menschenopfer bei den Griechen und Römern* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 15.3), Gießen: Töpelmann, 1915. Gerhard Radke interpretes the whole institution of the *virgines Vestales* as a permanent storage of victims for virgin sacrifices, which might be necessary especially in a crisis ("Acca Larentia und die fratres Arvales: Ein Stück römisch-sabinischer Frühgeschichte", *ANRW* I.2, 432; id. "Vesta", *KP* 5 [1975], 1228 f.).

³⁷ S. Ov. *fast.* 3.329-344 for Numa's sacrifice expiating lightnings (cf. Arnob. 5.1 following Valerius Antias) or the interpretations of the ritual of the *Argei*, where puppets made of straw are precipitated into the Tiber (see Latte, *Religionsgeschichte* [n. 36], 412-4).

³⁸ Many arguments in favor of death penalty refer to the "right" of killing in war: The respective crimes are interpreted as acts of civil war against the society. Thereby adequate mechanisms of repression appear to be necessary. See Cancik, *Todesstrafe* (n. 18).

³⁹ For Roman military law see E. Sander, "Das Recht des römischen Soldaten", *RhM* 101 (1958), 152-191. 193-234; id., "Das römische

Militärstrafrecht", *RhM* 103 (1960), 289-319; id., "Militärrecht", *RE Suppl.* 10 (1965), 394-410; C. E. Brand, *Roman Military Law*, Austin: Texas University Press, 1968; J. H. Jung, "Die Rechtsstellung der römischen Soldaten: Ihre Entwicklung von den Anfängen Roms bis auf Diokletian", *ANRW* II.14, 882-1013. For the provocation: J. Martin, "Die Provokation in der klassischen und späten Republik", *Hermes* 98 (1970), 72-96. For details of the following see Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), ch. 3, 4.5 and 16.

⁴⁰ See Cato, *ep. ad Marc.*, in *Cic. off.* 1.36 and *Plut. q. R.* 39. Cf. *Sall. Catil.* 9.4: ... *quod in bello saepius vindicatum est in eos, qui contra imperium in hostem pugnaverant quique tardius revocati proelio excesserant, quam qui signa relinquere aut pulsati loco cedere ausi erant.*

⁴¹ *Cic. Verr.* 5.77; *Ios. bell. Iud.* 7.153-5. Place and procedure are the same as with the Catilinarians (see above, n. 20).

⁴² This hypothesis should be assured by further research. Unfortunately, nearly no work on intellectual or literary discourse in Roman religion has been done. For our problem Cicero's position towards the institution of the fetials might be typical, when he is discussing the topics of dominion and just war. The systematic framework is derived from Greek, namely Stoic philosophy. On this basis Roman institutions are interpreted and (sometimes) idealized. See Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), 117-122, with further reading. Add S. Clavadetscher-Thürlemann, *Polemos Dikaïos und Bellum iustum: Versuch einer Ideengeschichte*, Zürich: Juris, 1985, and (with an evolutionary rather than historical image of the Republic) Mauro Mantovani, *Bellum iustum: Die Idee des gerechten Krieges in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Geist und Werk der Zeiten 77), Bern: Lang, 1990.

⁴³ Judging by the *Iudi*, for the modern analyst it is difficult to determine how far such events were seen as specifically religious ones by contemporaries. This has to be considered in any talk on the "legitimizing function" of religion.

⁴⁴ If Plutarch tells us that he who has sold his wife "is being sacrificed" (θύεσθαι), this is, I suppose, just a careless expression for the declaration of being *sacer* (see below). A slaughter of 300 members of Perusia's leading class by Augustus on an altar of *divus Iulius*, performed on the Ides of March (40 B.C.), is reported by Cassius Dio (48.14.4) and Sueton (*Aug.* 15, with doubts remaining: *scribunt quidam*). This is nothing but an invention of propaganda. It is based on the cruelties of the pillage of this Etruscan township (R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, corr. repr. [1939], Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952, 212; E. Kraggerud, "Perusia and the Aeneid", *SO* 62 [1987], 83; the story is accepted by A. Heuß, *Römische Geschichte*, 4th enl. ed., Braunschweig: Westermann, 1976, 231). The earliest notice is found in Seneca (*clem.* 1.11.1: ... *post Perusinas aras et proscriptiones*). Those closer to the events do not seem to know this tradition (*Prop.* 2.1.29; *Vell.* 2.74.4), even if an earlier origin must be suspected.

⁴⁵ See Coleman (n. 33).

⁴⁶ Implications for foreign policy are analyzed by B. MacBain, *Prodigy and Expiation: A Study in Religion and Politics in Republican Rome* (Collection Latomus 177), Bruxelles: Latomus, 1982; cf. Gladigow, "Konkrete Angst und offene Furcht: Am Beispiel des Prodigienwesens in Rom", in: Stietencron (n. 18), 61-77.

⁴⁷ It would not be difficult to list further examples. For a general appreciation of the phenomenon see Bird (n. 3).

⁴⁸ There is no convincing terminological differentiation covering geographical as well as social and functional aspects. It might be expected from studies on "local religion". The term "syncretism" does not describe the problem but blurs it.

⁴⁹ Cf. Bird (n. 3); Gladigow, "Unsterblichkeit und Moral: Riten der Regeneration als Modelle einer Heilsthematik", in: id. (ed.), *Religion und Moral*, Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1976, 99-117, argues against an exceedingly theological concept of soteriology.

⁵⁰ A definition in terms of sacral law: Fest. 424.5-13 L: *At homo sacer is est, quem populus iudicavit ob maleficium; neque fas est eum immolari, sed, qui occidit, parricidi non damnatur; nam lege tribunicia prima cavetur, "si quis eum, qui eo plebei scito sacer sit, occiderit, parricida ne sit."* *Ex quo quivis homo malus atque improbus sacer appellari solet.* Cf. Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), 79 f. The analogy of animal sacrifice is worked out by Gladigow, "Ovids Rechtfertigung der blutigen Opfer: Interpretationen zu Ovid, fasti I 335-456", *AU* 14.3 (1971), 19-21.

⁵¹ Already Mommsen, *Strafrecht* (n. 18), 937 f., was sceptical with regard to the practical realization.

⁵² By similar procedures canonical law sanctions important areas (sacraments, hierarchy), where prosecution might be difficult or impossible.

⁵³ See W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Religionen der Menschheit 15), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977, 137-9 and s.v. "Mord"; unfortunately Burkert does not say that all his references concern the mythical figure of Orestes. Purification rituals are dealt with by R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1983.

⁵⁴ *Leg. reg.* Numa 13; *XII tab.* 8.24a. For discussion see Kunkel (n. 6), 40-42: The wording suggests that it is neither a piacular sacrifice nor a compensation but the offer of a vicarious object for blood feud, which is killed instead of the offender (41).

⁵⁵ One should not connect the pontiffs' piacular sacrifice described by Tacitus (*ann.* 12.8), which is performed in a grove of Diana, with the Horatii. The theme of this sacrifice is "incest" and virginity.

⁵⁶ Differently dated by [F.] Münzer, "Horatius, 2)", *RE* 8.2 (1913), 2322-7; followed by H. G. Gundel, "Horatius. 1.", *KP* 2 (1967), 1217; "Die ganze Erzählung trägt in Sachgehalt und Komposition sehr alte Züge und war spätestens im 3. Jh. v. Chr. fester Bestandteil der röm(ischen) Tradition geworden."

⁵⁷ E. g. P. Curiatius Fistus Trigeminus, consul 453 B.C., and two C. Curiatii Trigemini known as *monetales* (moneyer) in the third quarter of the 2nd century B.C.

⁵⁸ Surely the Romans, whoever they were, did win. Any version telling of victorious Albans would have exclude a continuation including the murder of a sister and the *tigillum*. Such a variant would still further my argument.

⁵⁹ In his argumentation Münzer (n. 56) keeps quiet about these differences, which are visible even in Propertius (3.3.7). The new edition of Ennius' *Annales* by O. Skutsch (*The Annals of Q. Ennius*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) withdraws the possibility to argue with Ennius' reference to the duel. The only fragment (123 = 129 Vahlen) still referred to the fight would far better fit to Horatius Cocles (274 f.). A reference to an earlier event depends on the correct manuscript tradition of the book number used by Festus in citing the verse. Whereas Festus gives II, Cocles is dealt with in book 4. Additionally Propertius' list of Ennius' themes is not in accordance with such a story in the annals.

⁶⁰ These and the following dates are given according to T. R. S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (American Philological Association: Philological Monographs 15.1-3), 3 vols., New York/Atlanta: Philological Association/Scholars Press, 1951-1986; Gundel, Horatius (n. 56); id., "Curiatius", *KP* 1 (1964), 1343.

⁶¹ The terms are a bit anachronistic. They should help to clarify the lines of the struggle as the simplified model of parties should do (a thoroughgoing critique by Ch. Meier, *Res publica amissa: Eine Studie zur Verfassung und Geschichte der späten römischen Republik*, 2nd ed. [1966], Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980).

⁶² In his books *de inventione*, finished about 86 B.C., Cicero tells the story of the Horatii (2.2.78-86) as an example for juridical reasoning. The version is very close to Livy, perhaps Cicero and Antias used the same model. However, the whole complex of the lustration and the *tigillum* is missing. It might be suppressed as being without any juridical value. Given Valerius' antiquarian interests, an expansion by the annalist is equally possible. In the rôle of the prosecutor, Cicero stresses the missing trial before the killing of the sister, in the rôle of the defence counsel, he stresses the crime to stand up for the enemy against the own people.

⁶³ R. M. Ogilvie, "Livy", in: E. J. Kenney (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature 2: Latin Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 461. Comprehensive: [H.] Volkmann, "Valerius". 98", *RE* 7A,2 (1948), 2313-2340. His list of fragments does not include any passage of Livy, book, 1.

⁶⁴ Cf. for a detailed analysis of the sources Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), 100 f. P. de Francisci, *Primordia Civitatis* (Pontificum Institutum utriusque Iuris; Studie e documenta 2), Roma: Apollinaris, 1959, 616, and R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy: Book 1-5*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1965, 14, assume Antias on account of the name as well. The literary versions of the Horatius legend written after Livy and Dionysius offer no clue concerning the earlier sources (Münzer [n. 56], 2324).

⁶⁵ Not without invention of precedents. See Rüpke, *Domi militiae* (n. 25), 110 f. 115 f.

⁶⁶ See B. Rödl, *Das Senatus Consultum Ultimum und der Tod der Gracchen*, Diss. Erlangen 1968; J. Baron Ungern-Sternberg von Pürkel, *Untersuchungen zum spätrepublikanischen Notstandsrecht: Senatusconsultum ultimum und hostis-Erklärung* (Vestigia 11), München: Beck, 1970; Nippel (n. 9), 84-94. 219.

⁶⁷ Probably 114 B.C. See Latte, *Religionsgeschichte* (n. 36), 256, n. 4, and above, 3.2.

⁶⁸ It is difficult to classify the proscriptions (82/1 and 43 B.C.). In legal terms the killing is legitimized—for Sulla *post factum* only (cf. F. Hinard, *Les proscriptions de la Rome républicaine* [Collection de l'École Française 83], 1985, 67)—by the declaration of a state of emergency. Although permanently supplemented, lists of names intend to give an aura of legality and planned official prosecution to the slaughter. Attempts to establish a certain formality of the act of killing are visible only in a few instances (43-45). The most important facts and a judicious interpretation are given by Fuhrmann, "Provocatio", *RE* 23.2 (1959), 2440-4.

⁶⁹ See e.g. C. J. Skidmore, *Teaching by Examples: Valerius Maximus and the exempla Tradition*, Diss. Exeter 1988. Cf. in general: D. Mieth, "Narrative Ethik", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 22 (1975), 297-326.

ANAT-YAHU, SOME OTHER DEITIES, AND THE JEWS OF ELEPHANTINE

KAREL VAN DER TOORN

Summary

This contribution discusses the problem of the origin of the goddess Anat-Yahu and the related issue of the cultural background of the Jewish colony at Elephantine. It is argued that Anat-Yahu has been modeled after Anat-Bethel. Contrary to a current opinion, neither Bethel nor Anat-Bethel can be regarded as Phoenician gods. They are late Aramaean gods whose cult is confined to North Syria. Anat-Yahu must be regarded as an Aramaean creation, elicited by the identification of Yahu with Bethel. The latter identification was one of the results of the Aramaean migration to Samaria, either enforced or voluntary, at the end of the 8th century. The theory here proposed assumes that the Jews and Aramaeans of the colonies at Elephantine and Syene originated predominantly from Northern Israel. The ultimate origins of the Aramaean settlers go back to North Syria. The Jewish character of the Elephantine colony is secondary. It can be accounted for by the Judaeans transit of Israelite colonists on their way to Egypt and the secondary influx of actual Judaeans. Yet, despite the common designation of the Elephantine colony as "Jewish", its religion is in fact Israelite.

In recent years, the epigraphical discoveries from Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom have significantly influenced the current views on the history of Israelite religion. Not only do they provide evidence for topographically distinct manifestations of Yahweh ("Yahweh of Teman", "Yahweh of Samaria"), but they also refer several times to Yahweh and his Asherah". Many scholars believe this expression demonstrates that, in biblical times, Asherah was worshipped as the female consort of Yahweh. Speculations about the role of the "Hebrew Goddess"—the title of a monograph by R. Patai in 1967—seemed to be confirmed by extra-biblical texts. As a matter of consequence, biblical references and allusions to goddesses, if need be obtained by textual emendation, have again become a subject of great interest.

It is not the first time that extra-biblical texts refer to a named goddess as consort of Yahweh. At the beginning of this century, the publication of Aramaic texts from Elephantine elicited considerable interest for similar motives. One of the papyri recorded an oath by

Anat-Yahu.¹ This name is most likely interpreted as a genitival construction, meaning “Anat of Yahu”. Despite a few unconvincing attempts to interpret Anat here as a noun instead of a proper name,² the opinion of the first editor must be regarded as final. In a commentary to the *editio princeps*, E. Sachau wrote that, since ‘*ntbyt*’l refers to the Anat of the god Bethel, ‘*ntyhw* must refer to “the ‘Anāt of Jāhō, that is: a female deity who was thought of as the πάρεδρος of Jaho’”.³ The evidence is unequivocal: the Jews of Elephantine knew a goddess Anat consort of Yahu.

The origins of the goddess Anat-Yahu are the main issue of the present contribution. Before the epigraphical finds of Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, the beliefs and practices at Elephantine might have been dismissed as a type of syncretism which could only develop outside Israel or Judah. Now, however, there are cogent reasons to reconsider the origin of Anat-Yahu. Is there evidence that Anat was ever honoured as Yahweh’s consort in Israel itself? Since the question about the background of Anat-Yahu—both historical, cultural and topographical—entails a number of collateral issues, various other deities, such as Bethel and Anat-Bethel, will also be dealt with. A suggestion about the genesis of the colonies at Elephantine and Syene will conclude this paper.

I Anat in the Bible

For a convenient discussion of the data concerning Anat worship in Israel the reader may be referred to the relevant pages in Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (1990).⁴ The available evidence is scant. According to Smith, “except for personal names, Anat does not appear in the Bible” (p. 61). If toponyms are included and the Masoretic text is followed without emendation, this assessment is correct. For the purpose of the present inquiry, however, the occurrences of Anat based on textual emendation cannot be ignored. Three suggestions will be considered.

In 1892, Julius Wellhausen proposed a slight change in the Hebrew text of Hos 14,9a [ET 8a] to obtain the following translation: “What has Ephraim still to do with idols? I am his Anat and his Asherah”.⁵ The suggestion met with a mixed, though

predominantly critical, reception.⁶ After the publication of the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions, Wellhausen's reading won new supporters.⁷ Though admittedly ingenious, however, the emendation cannot be accepted. The transmitted text as it stands makes sense: criticizing the cult of the local Baals, described elsewhere in the book, the prophecy points to Yahweh as the one who responds to ('nh, cf. Hos 2,17.22.23) and looks after (šwr, cf. Hos 13,7) his people.⁸

The second proposal concerns Ex 32,18. Reading 'anat instead of 'annôt, R. Edelman maintains that "the voice of Anat" is contrasted with "the sound of victory" and "the sound of defeat".⁹ A modified version of the emendation has been proposed by M. Delcor, who inserted the word תרועה to obtain the expression קול תרועה לענות; he translates "J'entends le bruit d'un hourrah en l'honneur de 'Anath".¹⁰ Though this or a nearly identical interpretation is also defended by others,¹¹ it hardly carries conviction. Despite the slightly different vocalization of ענות in 32c, the word is likely to have had the same meaning as ענות in 32a and 32b. The text is apparently incomplete. The Septuagint insertion of γυν (γυνή) makes sense in the light of Exod 32,6. According to the context a boisterous party is going on; nothing implies that the goddess Anat was involved in one way or another.¹²

Perhaps the most fanciful emendation comes from W. F. Albright. By means of a different division of the letters and the insertion of a *taw*, he read Ps 68,24 as "Why, O Anat, dost thou wash thy feet in blood?", presumably the opening line of a lost poem. The proposal is mentioned merely for the sake of curiosity; Albright himself judged his introduction of Anat "probably more ingenious than convincing".¹³ Both his general interpretation of Ps 68 and his observations on details have indeed generally been received with skepticism.

The brief examination of the alleged biblical evidence based on emendation does not lead to a different conclusion than the one formulated by Smith: the lack of either inscriptional or biblical evidence for Anat suggests the absence of a cult devoted to her.¹⁴ A survey of the pantheon distribution in first millennium Syro-Palestine indicates that such an absence is hardly surprising. Anat occurs frequently in mythological and liturgical texts from Ugarit,

but she seems to have had little importance in first millennium Phoenicia.¹⁵ In view of the virtual absence of Anat worship in Palestine and Phoenicia, it is unlikely that the association of Anat with Yahweh (Yahu) has ancient roots in Israel. The presence of Anat-Yahu in Elephantine, then, cannot be used to prove that, in early Israelite religion, Anat was the consort of Yahweh.

The obvious conclusion would seem to be that Anat-Yahu is the creation of Egyptian Jews living in a syncretistic milieu. This solution is not attractive, however. Why would a Jewish minority group that was otherwise keen to preserve its native religious culture create an entirely new goddess? And if Anat-Yahu is their creation, why would they select the goddess Anat as a prototype, Anat being herself a foreign deity in Egypt? Such questions require that other possibilities be explored before the Jewish origin of Anat-Yahu is accepted. There is in fact another possible explanation of the origins of Anat-Yahu. The goddess has a parallel in Anat-Bethel, a parallel that is so close that the enigmatic origins of the former may be solved by those of the latter. In other words: if the origins of Anat-Bethel can be established, they may shed some light upon the origins of Anat-Yahu.

II Anat-Bethel

Anat-Yahu is not mentioned outside the Elephantine papyri; Anat-Bethel, on the other hand, occurs twice in Neo-Assyrian treaties. Esarhaddon's Treaty with Baal, King of Tyre, probably concluded after the conquest and destruction of Sidon in 676 B.C.E., mentions ^d*Ba-a-a-ti-dingir.meš* and ^d*A-na-ti-Ba-a-[a-ti-dingi]r.meš*,¹⁶ probably pronounced Bayt-'el and Anat-Bayt-'el.¹⁷ The same pair occurs in the list of divine witnesses invoked in the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon (672 B.C.E.). Though the tablet is damaged, the parallel with the Baal Treaty leaves no room for doubts about the restoration.¹⁸ These two references to Anat-Bethel precede the Elephantine documents by more than two centuries. It follows that the cult of Anat-Bethel did not originate in Egypt, but was introduced by West-Semitic immigrants who brought their native gods along. But where did the goddess come from?

In a survey of the deities of Israel's neighbours, Mark Smith

writes that the treaty of Esarhaddon with Baal II of Tyre “lists in order the deities of Tyre as Bethel, Anat-Bethel, Baal Shamem, Baal-Malaga, Baal-Saphon, Melqart, Eshmun and Astarte. The initial position of Bethel would point to his status as the primary god of the Tyrian pantheon.”¹⁹ Here, Smith adopts the position of Michael L. Barré. In an appendix to a study of the treaty between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedonia, Barré tries to demonstrate that, according to Esarhaddon’s treaty with Baal, Bethel and Anat-Bethel were the supreme deities of Tyre.²⁰ It is his contention that in Neo-Assyrian treaties the Sebeti (i.e., the Pleiades) conclude the list of Assyrian gods. Since Bethel and Anat-Bethel immediately follow the Sebeti, they must be regarded as the first pair of foreign gods.

To this it may be objected that (1) the phrase “May the great gods of heaven and earth, the gods of Assyria, the gods of Akkad and the gods of Eber-nari curse you with an indissoluble curse” in the god-list of the Baal II treaty obviously serves as a summary of the preceding list, which includes, at the end, Bethel and Anat-Bethel; (2) Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty, concluded four years before the treaty with Baal of Tyre, also mentions Bethel and Anat-Bethel; there were no vassal relations with Tyre at that point; (3) the writing ^d*Ba-a-a-ti-dingir.meš* can be explained only on the basis of Aramaic, which suggests that the god and his consort were at home in Aramaic-speaking territory; (4) Bethel and Anat-Bethel do not occur in texts from Tyre or its vicinity, unlike Baal, Astarte, Melqart and Eshmun. The fact is surprising, if they were indeed the supreme deities of Tyre.

If Bethel and Anat-Bethel are not at home in Tyre, where do they belong? Esarhaddon’s treaty with Baal of Tyre gives a clue when it summarizes the witnessing gods on the Assyrian side as “the gods of Assyria, the gods of Akkad (= Babylonia), and the gods of Eber-Nari” (iv 8’-9’). Bethel and Anat-Bethel clearly belong to the third category. Though Aramaean rather than Assyrian, they are listed because they were worshipped on Assyrian territory, perhaps at state expense. Other gods of Eber-Nari (*e-bir-id*) are Aramish and Kubaba, mentioned in Esarhaddon’s succession treaty (§§ 54-55, lines 466-71), and possibly the Sebeti.²¹ Aramish, erroneously read [^d*Ga*]r-ga-miš by a previous editor of the text,²² occurs in Ugaritic

plenilunium rituals under the form *rmš* (KTU 1.46:13; 109:7).²³ The scanty evidence available indicates that his cult was practised in North Syria.²⁴ Kubaba is the well-known goddess of Car-chemish. Since Bethel and Anat-Bethel are mentioned just after Aramish and before Kubaba (Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty, line 467), their cult must be located in North Syria as well.

A specific topographical location of the cult of Anat-Bethel can only be proposed in connection with the god Bethel. This god makes a relatively late appearance in Syrian religion; he is not mentioned in any second millennium text, and his name does not begin to occur as an element in theophorous names until ca. 600 B.C.E. The oldest attestations of Bethel are in the Esarhaddon treaties, which corroborates the idea that he is an Aramaean god, not a Phoenician deity in Aramaean guise.²⁵ His name presumably derives from the place-name Bethel, "House-of-El": perhaps the Bethel mentioned in the treaty of Barga'ya with Mati'el (Sfire IA 34).²⁶ This town has tentatively been identified with modern Bêt Lāhā, some 30 km west of Aleppo.²⁷ An Aramaic record of debt from 570 B.C.E., in which creditor, debtor and witnesses all have names compounded with Bethel, was found in Sfire, ca. 25 km south-west of Aleppo (KAI 227). It supports the topographical location of Bethel's worship here proposed. So does a Greek inscription from Kafr Nebo near Aleppo, mentioning Συμβέτυλος (= Eshem-Bethel).²⁸ In the absence of conclusive evidence, however, it would be rash to press for a narrowly defined area of Bethel's worship. A third century C.E. inscription from Dura-Europos calls Zeus Betylos "the ancestral god of those who dwell along the Orontes", which is a late indication of the North Syrian location of Bethel's cult.²⁹

III Aramaean Gods at Elephantine and Syene

If Bethel and Anat-Bethel are late Aramaean gods whose cult is confined to North Syria, their presence in Egypt in the 5th century B.C.E. would imply that they were brought there by North Syrian Aramaeans. Since the documents show that the Jewish community at Elephantine recognized other gods as well, the question must be asked whether they, too, are originary from North Syria. Because

of the close ties between the Jews of Elephantine and the Aramaeans of Syene, the gods of the latter group will be included in this discussion as well.

Of the two other gods connected with Bethel, Ashim-Bethel and Herem-Bethel, only the former can be qualified as a distinct deity; Herem-Bethel is not a compound divine name, but refers to "the sacred property of Bethel".³⁰ In Aramaic anthroponyms from Egypt, the god Ashim occurs as an independent theophorous element.³¹ He is presumably identical with the god Ashima' mentioned in Aramaic inscriptions from Tema.³² According to 2 Kgs 17,30, Ashima' was the god of the people from Hamath. The reference to Ashim-Bethel in the Kafr Nebo inscription supports the conclusion that Ashima' is indeed a North Syrian deity.³³

Alongside Bethel, Anat-Bethel and Ashim-Bethel, the pantheon of the Aramaean community at Syene included the pair Nabu³⁴ and Banit.³⁵ Evidently, these gods have no Syrian origins. Nabu is a Babylonian god and his main temple is in Borsippa; though he was increasingly popular throughout the Mesopotamian area. Banit is still a riddle. Her name is originally an epithet (meaning either "Beautiful One" or "Creatrix"), providing no clue for her identification. It has been suggested that she is the consort of Ninurta, but the connection cannot be satisfactorily proven.³⁶ In view of the Aramaic evidence from Egypt, a connection with Nabu would be more likely. The only hint at their relationship in other texts, however, is the likeness between the descriptions of the ritual marriage of Nabu and his consort Tashmetu (TIM 9 no. 54), on the one hand, and that of Banit with her anonymous male companion (STT 366), on the other.³⁷ Yet whether Banit was originally the consort of Ninurta or Nabu, in either case she is a Babylonian goddess. There is no compelling reason, then, to contest the topographical link between Banit and Babylon made in 2 Kgs 17,30.³⁸ Although both onomastic and inscriptional evidence indicate that Nabu and Banit were known and, to some extent, worshipped in Late Iron Age Syria, they can by no means be regarded as typically Syrian deities.

The situation is different for Baal-shamayin and El. Though these gods apparently did not receive a cult in Syene, they occur a number of times in papyrus Amherst 63. Thus, in the Aramaic ver-

sion of Psalm 20, both are mentioned.³⁹ Vleeming and Wesselius have cogently argued that the papyrus originated in an Aramaean group which was “basically identical with the Aramaean community of Syene as encountered in the documents from the Jewish community of Elephantine and the Hermopolis correspondence.”⁴⁰ It is likely, therefore, that El and Baal-shamayin were at least known to the colonists of Syene. El is a common Northwest Semitic god to whom the devotion is largely rhetoric in the first millennium B.C.E. Having turned into a *deus otiosus*, his place was gradually taken by Baal-shamem or Baal-shamayin. Although Baal-shamayin is well attested in Phoenician inscriptions, he occurs as the foremost deity in the Aramaic inscription of Zakkur, king of Lu’ash and Hamath (KAI 202).

On balance, it must be concluded that not all the gods worshipped by the Aramaean community in Egypt came directly from North Syria. Nabu and Banit are primarily at home in Babylonia: and so are Bel, Shamash and Nergal, once mentioned in the salutatory formula at the beginning of a letter from Elephantine.⁴¹ The fact does not preclude the possibility, of course, that by 750 B.C.E. these gods were accepted and assimilated in certain Syrian quarters. At any rate they were all imported into Egypt; none of them was actually conceived in Egypt. For the sake of expedience, the inquiry into the routes by which these gods reached Egypt must momentarily be postponed. Suffice it to state, without further demonstration, that there is hardly any evidence for the involvement of other groups, besides Aramaeans and Jews, in the introduction of these deities into Egypt.

IV Yahweh and the Gods of the Aramaeans

Attention must again be given to the question of the origins of Anat-Yahu. As argued before, it is unlikely that she is an Israelite creation. Since all the other gods of the Aramaeans and Jews in Egypt were conceived outside Egypt, however, it is difficult to believe that Anat-Yahu would be the sole exception. A third possibility must therefore be reckoned with, viz. that she was created by the same North Syrian Aramaeans who brought Bethel and Anat-Bethel to Egypt. The solution presupposes, evidently,

that there were contacts between North Syrian Aramaeans and Israelites prior to the settlement of the colonies in Egypt. These contacts, moreover, must have been intensive: since they presumably led to Aramaean acceptance of Yahu and the subsequent creation of Anat-Yahu as his appropriate consort. At this point it is necessary, therefore, to ascertain whether there are traces of such contacts.

The quest for traces of influence of Israelite religion on Aramaean concepts and practices may conveniently take as its starting-point a recent article by Stephanie Dalley.⁴² Dalley seeks to demonstrate that Yahweh was a major god in North Syria by the 8th century B.C.E. The hard core of the evidence is onomastic: the Annals of Tiglath-pileser record the annexation, in 738 B.C.E., of the nineteen districts of Hamath which had defected to a king named Azri-Yahu (*Iaz-ri-ya-a-û*).⁴³ His home is unknown. It is most likely Hatarikka (biblical Hadrach, Zech 9,1), a small state between Aleppo and Hamath. Other Assyrian records mention Yau-bi'di king of Hamath who, in 720 B.C.E., organised an anti-Assyrian revolt of the subjugated cities Arpad, Šimirra, Damascus and Samaria.⁴⁴ A third instance of a North-Syrian "Yahwistic" name is found in the Bible. According to 2 Sam 8,9-10, Toi king of Hamath had a son by the name of Yôrām, a contemporary of David.

Although three personal names constitute a remarkably small body of evidence, Dalley argues that they indicate that "in the late 8th century both before and after the fall of Samaria, Yahweh was worshipped as a major god in Hamath and its vicinity" (p. 28). She observes that Azri-Yau and Yau-bi'di were probably indigenous rulers rather than usurpators of Israelite descent; since, in the onomastic tradition of the time, royal names use only a major god as theophorous element, Yahweh must have been a major god in Hatarikka and Hamath. Dalley also adduces biblical evidence in support of her view. The address of Sennacherib's Rabshakeh to the people of Jerusalem refers to the defeat of Hamath and Arpad in order to dissuade them from trusting in Yahweh: "Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad?" (2 Kgs 18,33-4; Isa 36,18-9). This rhetorical question, Dalley

urges, implies that Hamath and Arpad depended on Yahweh for their deliverance; and that he had failed them.

These are conclusions that go well beyond what the evidence can sustain. It is difficult to believe that Yahweh became all of a sudden a major god in Hamath around 720 B.C.E.; if he was a major god then, he must have been one of the more important deities before. Yet the only gods mentioned in the native inscriptions are the chief goddess Ba'alat, and the gods Baalshamayin, Elwer, Shamash and Shahar.⁴⁵ Yahweh (or Yahu) goes unmentioned. The argument which is based on the address by Sennacherib's Rabshakeh is flawed by tendentious citation and a failure to grasp the point of comparison. The passage in which the Rabshakeh asks his audience "Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad?" continues: "Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?" (2 Kgs 18,34; cf. Isa 36,19).⁴⁶ According to the logic of Dalley's demonstration, this would imply that Yahweh was also their main god, which is obviously false since one chapter earlier in the Second Book of the Kings, Nibhaz and Tartak are mentioned as the gods of Ivvah, and Adrammelech and Anammelech as the gods of Sepharvaim (2 Kgs 17,31). In fact, the editor of the Rabshakeh's demoralizing speech believed that the chief deity of Hamath was Ashima (2 Kgs 17,30). The Rabshakeh is not concerned with the identity of the gods of the nations; he merely observes that, if the gods of other nations were unable to deliver their people from the menace of Assur, the national god of Judah would do no better.

If Dalley's usage of the biblical material is questionable, her handling of the cuneiform data is anything but cautious. Yahwistic names are rarely found outside Israel; before positing one, therefore, all other possibilities of interpretation must be exhausted. Dalley rather lightly dismisses Lipiński's interpretation of the name Yau-bi'di as 'Iluyahū-bi-'īdī, "God-will-appear-as-my-witness".⁴⁷ Yet Lipiński draws attention to an important difficulty of the "Yahwistic" interpretation. The name Yau-bi'di, as it is conventionally referred to, occurs in six different spellings: (1) *Iya-ú-bi-'-di*; (2) *ḏya-ú-bi-'-di*; (3) *Iya-bi-'-di*; (4) *ḏya-bi-'-di*; (5) *īi-lu-ú-bi-'-di*; and (6) *Idingir-bi-'-di*.⁴⁸ Dalley concludes from this evidence that the Assyrians give El-bi'di as a variant of Yau-bi'di, because they "thought of Yahweh as El" (p. 31). However, the reading El-bi'di

is unlikely, in view of the spelling *l_i-lu-ú-bi-'-di*. The latter suggests that the name was pronounced *lû-bi'di* or *luyu-bi'di*. Since the sign *-ya-* can also be read as *-yu-*, it is possible that the name was never pronounced *Yau-bi'di* but *luyu-bi'di* or, in its shortened form, *Yu-bi'di*.⁴⁹ Though it would be unwise to exclude the possibility that *Yau-bi'di* is in fact a Hebrew theophoric name, the evidence is surely not unequivocal. In view of such uncertainties, *Yau-bi'di* cannot be used as evidence for Yahweh-worship in North Syria.

Also to be excluded from the evidence is the name *Yoram*, mentioned as the son of *Toi*, king of *Hamath*, in 2 Sam 8,10. The Yahwistic element of *Yoram* is replaced by "Hadô" in 1 Chr 18,10, which agrees with LXX *Ἰεδδουραν* in 2 Sam 8,10. Though both the Chronicler and the LXX tradition could be suspected of cleaning up their source, it is difficult to see why they would emendate a Yahwistic name into a non-Yahwistic one, unless the latter is historically correct. Like *Yau-bi'di*, *Yoram* is a very dubious instance of a North Syrian Yahwistic name. All things considered, then, the only remaining piece left of hard evidence is the name *Azri-Yau*. Though there can be little doubt that this is indeed a Yahwistic name, its significance for the relations between Israel and North Syria is not clear. Cogan and Tadmor urge that the name is Israelite; because the Aramaic form would be *Idri-Yau*.⁵⁰ Dalley's dismissal notwithstanding (p. 28), they have a sound argument. All that the evidence allows by way of conclusion, therefore, is that the state of *Hatarikka* probably had a ruler of Israelite descent around 740 B.C.E.

Neither the onomastic nor the biblical evidence indicates that the Aramaeans in North Syria had more than occasional contacts with Israel. The matter takes on a different aspect, however, when the possibility of Aramaean influences on Israelite beliefs and customs is explored. According to Jer 48,13, "the house of Israel" put its trust in Bethel, as Moab did in Chemosh. The parallelism with Chemosh makes it plausible that Bethel refers here to the god of that name. The fact is surprising because Bethel is a North Syrian deity, otherwise unconnected with Israel. Yet it must be assumed that some time before 600 B.C.E.(?)—the date of the prophecy being the *terminus ante quem*—the cult of Bethel was introduced into

Israel. Another North Syrian god who is perhaps mentioned as being worshipped in Israel is Ashim. In the Book of Amos there is a reference, probably not by the prophet himself, to “the guilt of Samaria” (*’ašmat Šomrôn*, Am 8,14). The expression has all appearances of a theological correction of a divine name, similar to *šiqqûš mēšōmēm*, “the abomination which makes desolate”, for Baal-shamem (Dan 11,31; 12,11).⁵¹ What deity is referred to? The RSV translates “Ashimah of Samaria”: apparently a reference to the Ashim known from onomastics and the compound Ashim-Bethel. It is also possible, however, that the original text referred to the Asherah of Samaria (cf. HALAT 93a); though the correction of Asherah into *’ašmâ*, “guilt”, would be unique in the Hebrew Bible.

The most striking evidence so far of Aramaean influence on Israelite religion has come to light in Papyrus Amherst 63 xii 11-19, the Aramaic version of Psalm 20. In a recent study of this text, Ingo Kottsieper concludes that the Hebrew poem is an adaptation of an Aramaic text closely resembling Papyrus Amherst 63 xii 11-19, if not identical with it.⁵² Since the religious universe of the papyrus is very similar to that of the Aramaean community in Syene, it may be assumed that the Aramaic psalm has North Syrian origins (N.B. the reference to the god Bethel in line 18). Kottsieper argues that the Israelite adaptation took place in the Hasmonaean Era; because of its references to the king and the sacrificial cult. Though such references might fit in pre-exilic times, the strict avoidance of heathen divine names would require, so Kottsieper maintains, a post-exilic date (p. 244). This return to the dating of Duhm is not self-evident, however. It could be that the adaptation occurred in two (or more than two) phases: the one involving, amongst other things, a reference to the king; the other a correction of certain divine names. Even the hypothesis of a single adaption would not necessarily lead to a post-exilic date, since the Deuteronomic theology with its mono-Yahwistic emphasis is also pre-exilic.

The reference to Bethel as the confidence of Israel (Jer 48,13), on the one hand, and Psalm 20, on the other, are two examples of North Syrian influence on Israelite religion. The period of such influence cannot be firmly established on the basis of these two biblical texts. On the hypothesis that this period falls before the establishment of the Aramaean colonies in Egypt (ca. 600 B.C.E)

and after the defeat of North Syria by the Assyrian kings (ca. 730-700 B.C.E.), it must be situated, *grosso modo*, in the 7th century B.C.E. The principal argument in support of this solution is provided by the Bible. According to 2 Kgs 17,24, the Assyrian authorities settled people from Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim in the cities of Samaria. This report on the population of Northern Israel in the 7th century deserves to be examined in some detail.

V Northern Israel in the 7th Century B.C.E.

Judging by the account in 2 Kgs 17,24-41, the deportees who came to live in Israel came originally from two regions: viz. Northern Babylonia and North Syria. Babylon and Cuthah (Tell Ibrahim)⁵³ lie at the heart of the former Babylonian kingdom. Avvah (or Ivvah), Hamath, and Sepharvaim are likely to be situated in North Syria. Although it has been proposed to identify Hamath with a town called Amâ in Babylonia,⁵⁴ the traditional identification with Hamath on the Orontes is more plausible. A variant list of North Syrian cities, in 2 Kgs 18,34 (cf. 2 Kgs 19,13; Isa 37,13), refers to Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah. Since Arpad is doubtlessly to be identified with the capital of the Aramaean kingdom of Arpad (modern Tell Rif'at), Hamath can hardly be any other city than Hamath on the Orontes. Avvah (Ivvah) and Hena cannot be firmly located as yet; whilst Sepharvaim is frequently identified with Sibraim, which Ezek 47,16 locates on the border between Damascus and Hamath.

The broad topographical identification of the origins of the deportees here proposed is corroborated by the biblical details about the gods which they worshipped. Saccuth-Benoth is most plausibly interpreted as "an image of Banit" (cf. LXX Βανιθ),⁵⁵ Banit being an epithet used as the proper name of a Babylonian goddess, perhaps Tashmetu. Nergal had indeed his centre of worship in Cuthah, the city 25 km north of Kish. If Ashimah is identical with Ashim and Ashim-Bethel, his North Syrian origins agree with the available data on Bethel and Anat-Bethel. Nibhaz and Tartak, gods of the Avvites, are not documented elsewhere. Their names are presumably corruptions.

Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of the Sepharvites, have been connected with Hadad and Anat on the assumption that the former is a corruption of Adadmelech and the latter a contraction of Anatmelech. John Day now rejects the reading Adadmelech and maintains that Adrammelech may well be correct. It could be the name of a Phoenician god of child sacrifice, though the evidence for this deity is scarce.⁵⁶ The interpretation of Anammelech as a form of Anat is a distinct possibility. Alternatively, it might be suggested that ענמלך should be read ענמלך, to be vocalized as Ogmelech. Og, the Rephaite king "who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei" (Josh 12,4), occurs as a chthonic deity in a sarcophagus inscription from Byblos.⁵⁷ He is to be identified with the Ugaritic god Milku, also called Rapi'u, who "dwells in Ashtartu and reigns in Hidra'yu" (KTU 1.100:41; 1.108:3; cf. also the name Milkashtart).

The new inhabitants of Israel maintained the religious traditions of their homeland: yet they also adopted Yahweh into their pantheon, since he was the god of the land. This partial religious acculturation may indeed have been stimulated by the Assyrian authorities, as the biblical record suggests.⁵⁸ The Deuteronomic historiographer characterizes the ensuing syncretism by saying that "they feared Yahweh but also served their own gods" (2 Kgs 17,33). It is not unreasonable to suppose that the introduction of Bethel into Israel occurred precisely in this time of religious cross-fertilization. Evidently, the implication is that the reference to Israel's trust in Bethel in Jer 48,13 is an anachronism, since the text sees in this confidence a cause of Israel's defeat, presumably in 722. It is not unusual in prophetic historiography, however, that lacunae in the knowledge of the past are filled out with data from the contemporary situation.

The cultural melting-pot which Israel became in the 7th century B.C.E. included in fact a fourth population group, besides Babylonians, North Syrians and Israelites. Although not mentioned in the biblical records, the Annals of Sargon II report that the Assyrian king deported groups of Arabs to Samaria. In his monograph on *The Ancient Arabs*, Israel Eph'al doubts whether these Arabs were forced to dwell in Samaria. It is possible that they went there willingly, and that their migration was merely condoned by the

Assyrian authorities.⁵⁹ Something similar may be true, incidentally, of the North Syrian settlers in Israel. Although the biblical records present their migration as a deportation, the possibility cannot be excluded that many of them came as refugees, more or less of their own accord. The Assyrian annals refer to the deportation of Babylonians and Cuthaeans, but no measures of deportation are mentioned for the population of Hamath after its defeat. Hamath and Israel were allies at the end of the 8th century B.C.E.; it would hardly be a sign of political wisdom to bring former conspirators together. It is conceivable, however, that as the circumstances at home deteriorated, Aramaeans from Hamath and vicinity looked upon Israel as a haven and fled to the south.

Irrespective of the causes of the ethnic and cultural mixture in Israel, it must have produced a very variegated religious life. The gods mentioned in 2 Kgs 17 can hardly have been the only ones to have received worship. It is unlikely that people from Babylon and Cuthah should not have continued to worship Bel, Nabu, and Shamash: three major Babylonian deities. Nor can it be expected that North Syrian Aramaeans would have abandoned the cult of Bethel and Anat-Bethel. The Arab population would have brought their gods: such as the heaven-goddess Allat.

The adoption of Yahweh, in this syncretistic climate, may well have resulted in his being identified with other major gods. An administrative text from Elephantine recording money contributions for the temple of Yahu indicates that, having been collected, the money was allotted to Yahu, Ashim-Bethel and Anat-Bethel.⁶⁰ The occurrence of the latter two deities is surprising in the context. In a Yahwistic temple the expected goddess—if any there was—would be Anat-Yahu. The most plausible solution to the problem, it seems, consists in supposing that Yahu and Bethel were practically identified at Elephantine.⁶¹ Which means, incidentally, that the population made no clear distinction between Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel either. If Yahu and Bethel were identified at Elephantine, might not the same have occurred in Israel? Continuing this train of thought, it is conceivable that Anat-Yahu was created by the Aramaean deportees in Israel on the model of Anat-Bethel. In fact, it is easier to suppose that worship of Anat-Yahu originated among Aramaeans who recently adopted Yahu into their cult,

rather than to assume that the goddess was created by Elephantine Jews. The solution implies that the concept of Anat-Yahu came into existence on Israelite soil: yet that it was primarily at home in the Aramaean community there.

VI The Jews of Elephantine

In more than one respect, the situation in 7th century Israel contains the seeds of the religious pluralism to which the Aramaic documents from Elephantine bear witness. The population of Northern Israel was diversified; consisting primarily of Israelites and Aramaeans, it also included Babylonian and Arab elements. Aramaic was their common language. Worship was directed to a whole host of deities: including Bethel, Anat-Bethel, Ashim-Bethel, Banit, Nabu, Yahweh or Yahu, and—presumably—Anat-Yahu. Other deities, such as Bel, Nergal and Shamash, were certainly not unknown. To what precise extent the different population groups mingled and intermarried is, however, largely a matter of speculation. They would have lived neither in splendid isolation from each other nor in perfect familiarity. Though each group may have maintained many of its native traditions, few will have been impervious to influences from their near surroundings.

The situation just described for Northern Israel after 700 B.C.E. contains many elements which recur at 5th century B.C.E. Elephantine and Syene. The colonies are populated by Jews and Aramaeans who use Aramaic for their written communications: worship is directed to precisely those gods which were worshipped in Israel two centuries before. Dupont-Sommer judiciously observes that it is unlikely that it is in Egypt that the Elephantine colonists began to include Anat and Bethel, Bel and Nabu in their religious universe; it is probably from Palestine that they brought these gods.⁶² In his study of the Elephantine archives, B. Porten writes that “the Arameans of Syene and Memphis ... may have been descendants ... of deportees from Arpad, Hamath, and other cities who were settled in Samaria and at some other time migrated to Egypt.”⁶³ The two suggestions are complementary; they provide an attractive explanation of the many points of contact between the colonies at Elephantine and Syene. Though their respective popula-

tion was ethnically distinct, the one consisting of Jews and the other of Aramaeans, they share a common cultural heritage.

The parallels between the Egyptian Jews and Aramaeans are such, that it is questionable whether the two groups can be as clearly distinguished as is often done. On the basis of an onomastic study, Michael Silverman concludes that there were "racial Arameans" not only at Syene, but also at Elephantine.⁶⁴ Although it cannot be denied that Hebrew names predominate at Elephantine, and Aramaic ones at Syene, a rigorous division runs into difficulties. At least three people are called "Arameans of Syene" in some places, and "Jews of Elephantine" in other places.⁶⁵ It is possible to explain this phenomenon by taking "Aramaean" as a military designation and "Jewish" as an ethnic designation; the fact still confirms the close ties between the two communities. Bel, Nabu, Shamash and Nergal are mentioned in a letter written by one Jew addressing another⁶⁶; the religious "syncretism" is certainly not a strictly Aramaean phenomenon.

The history of the Jewish migration into Egypt is likely to have been complex; any modern reconstruction can hardly be more than an informed guess. The obscurity of the historical evidence, however, should not be a reason to refrain from general hypotheses. Both the background of Anat-Yahu and the entire picture of the religious life at Elephantine and Syene strongly suggest that the historical core of the communities came from Northern Israel. The immigrants thus came from a religious culture they largely had in common. For two or three generations the population groups had lived in symbiosis, which led to a cultural pluralism which will have affected both Aramaeans and Israelites.

The fact that the religious practices in the Elephantine colony have a Northern Israelite background means that the Jewish segment of the population is chronologically secondary. The Jewish character of the Elephantine colony is probably based on an important influx of Judahites who joined the Israelite settlers. It must be kept in mind, moreover, that the emigrants from Northern Israel would have entered Egypt by way of Judah. It may be surmised that many of them had not intended to prolong their wandering all the way into Egypt. At any event, some of them stayed in Judah for a significant length of time. One reason to suppose that this is

so is the presence in Judah, around 600 B.C.E., of the cult of the Queen of Heaven (Jer 7,18; 44,15-30). The Queen of Heaven is none other than Anat, who is called the Lady-of-Heaven (*b'lt šmm*) in Ugaritic texts.⁶⁷ At Syene, the names Anat-Bethel and Queen-of-Heaven are used as variant designations of the same deity. Since Anat was not traditionally worshipped in Judah, her cult must have come from elsewhere. Isaiah does not know her yet. The most probable suggestion would be that Israelites—or Israelite Aramaeans originally from North Syria—introduced the cult of the goddess when they had found refuge in Judah sometime after 700 B.C.E.

Little is known of the history of Israel after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.E. There is at least some evidence, however, for continued relations with Judah. Thus the Book of Jeremiah has a reference to a pilgrimage by eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria to bring offerings to Jerusalem (Jer 41,5). If the Deuteronomic School does indeed have Northern Israelite origins, as many scholars believe, it could be taken as evidence for the transfer of Israelite theology to Judaeon soil. Here, the Book of Hosea might be quoted as another instance. In both cases, the transfer of ideas and writings will have involved a transfer of people as well. Though only obliquely attested, such movements may have affected more than a few inhabitants of Northern Israel.

In short, the theory here proposed assumes that the Jews and Aramaeans of the colonies at Elephantine and Syene originated predominantly from Northern Israel. The ultimate origins of the Aramaean settlers go back to North Syria. The Jewish character of the Elephantine colony is secondary. It can be accounted for by the Judaeon transit of Israelite colonists on their way to Egypt and the secondary influx of actual Judaeans. Yet, despite the common designation of the Elephantine colony as “Jewish”, its religion is in fact Israelite. Also, the ethnic differences between the colonies of Elephantine and Syene do not necessarily imply that there were great cultural differences.⁶⁸

The concept of Anat-Yahu is an illustration of the cultural symbiosis which has marked the Israelites and the Aramaeans living in Egypt. The goddess must be regarded as an Aramaean creation, elicited by the identification of Yahu with Bethel. The latter identification was one of the results of the Aramaean migration to

Samaria, either enforced or voluntary, at the end of the 8th century. Though it is therefore correct, after all, to call Anat-Yahu an Israelite goddess, it must be remembered that her origins do not go beyond ca. 700 B.C.E.: and that her theological paternity is ultimately Aramaean.⁶⁹

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¹ A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 1923, no. 44:3.

² Thus, e.g., W. F. Albright, The Evolution of the West-Semitic Divinity 'Anat-Yahu, *AJS* 42 (1924-25), 94-96; J. T. Milik, Les papyrus araméens d'Hermonopolis et les cultes syro-phéniciens en Egypte perse, *Bib* 48 (1967), 567; B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 1968, 170-71; Saul M. Olyan, Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven, *UF* 19 (1987), 170.

³ E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine*, 1911, xxv.

⁴ Smith, *The Early History of God*, 61-64.

⁵ J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten, Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* 5, 1892, 21.131.

⁶ It is accepted by such scholars as E. Jacob, Osée, *Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament* XI/a, 1965, 95; O. Eissfeldt, Review of Hosea commentary by Van Leeuwen, *BiOr* 27 (1970), 243. Others either reject or ignore the emendation, e.g., K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, HAT 13, 1904, 108 ("gesucht"); W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, ICC, 1905, 415 ("a freak of the imagination"); W. Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, GHAT III/4, 1922, 81; H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton* 1: Hosea, BK XIV/1, 1965 2. Auflage, 302 ("allzu kühn"); W. Rudolph, *Hosea*, KAT XIII/1, 1966, 249 ("schwer denkbar"); J. L. Mays, *Hosea*, 1969, 184; F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea*, AB 24, 1980, 642; J. Jeremias, Der Prophet Hosea, *ATD* 24/1, 1983, 173.

⁷ M. Weinfeld, Kuntillet 'Ajrud Inscriptions and their Significance, *SEL* 1 (1984), 122-23; Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, OBO 74, 1987, 44; O. Loretz, 'Anat-Aschera (Hos 14,9) und die Inschriften von Kuntillet 'Ajrud, *SEL* 6 (1989), 57-65; J.-G. Heintz, Une tradition occultée? La déesse cananéenne 'Anat et son 'asêrah dans le livre du prophète Osée (chap. 14, v. 9b), *Ktema* 11 (1986 [1990]), 3-13.

⁸ See A. S. van der Woude, Bemerkungen zu einigen umstrittenen Stellen im Zwölfprophetenbuch, *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, *AOAT* 212, 1981, 483-485.

⁹ R. Edelman, Exodus 32:18: קוֹל עֲנַת אֲנָכִי שׁוֹמֵעַ, *JThSt* n.s. 1 (1950), 56; Id., To עֲנַת in Exodus XXXII 18, *VT* 16 (1966), 355. See also R. N. Whybray, עֲנַת in Exodus XXXII 18, *VT* 17 (1967), 122; A. Graeme Auld, A Judean Sanctuary of 'Anat (Josh. 15:59)?, *Tel Aviv* 4 (1977), 85-86.

¹⁰ M. Delcor, Une allusion à 'Anath, déesse guerrière en Ex. 32:18?, *JJS* 33 (1982), 145-160.

¹¹ Thus, e.g., J.-G. Heintz, *Une tradition occultée?*, 11-12.

¹² A. Deem suggests to translate 'annôt as "orgy" (The Goddess Anath and Some Biblical Hebrew Cruces, *JSS* 23 [1978], 29). It is difficult to defend this rendering without positing a missing complement of the verb.

¹³ W. F. Albright, *A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems* (Ps LXVIII), *HUCA* 23/1 (1950-51), 28-9.

¹⁴ Smith, *The Early History of God*, 6.

¹⁵ See, e.g., A. W. Eaton, *The Goddess Anat: The History of Her Cult, Her Mythology and Her Iconography*, 1964, 120-21. The occurrence of Anat in a fourth-century B.C.E. bilingual inscription from Cyprus (KAI 42) may be deceptive, since her name might have suggested itself as the nearly homophonic equivalent of Athena.

¹⁶ R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien*, AfO Beiheft 9, 1956, 109 § 69 iv 6. The text can also conveniently be consulted in S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, SAA 2, 1988, no. 5.

¹⁷ For the pronunciation see M. D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents*, HSM 7, 1976, 46-7; M. L. Barré, *The God-List in the Treaty Between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedonia: A Study in the Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Tradition*, 1983, 46-7.

¹⁸ Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty, line 467. For a recent edition with full display of the textual witnesses see K. Watanabe, *Die adê-Vereidigung anlässlich der Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons*, BagM Beih. 3, 1987. The text is also to be found as no. 6 in S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, 1988.

¹⁹ Smith, *The Early History of God*, 25.

²⁰ Barré, *The God-List*, 43-4. 128-38.

²¹ Note that the Pleiades received a cult in Emar, see Arnaud, *Emar* VI.3, no. 378:7 (cf. 373:72'. 126').

²² See R. Borger, *Zu den Asarhaddon-Verträgen aus Nimrud*, ZA 54 (1961), 190. The correct reading has been established by Watanabe, *Die adê-Vereidigung*, 195-6.

²³ See P. Xella, *I testi rituali di Ugarit*, 1981, 53. The name of the god is unrelated to the deified Old Akkadian king Rimus, nor has it anything to do with Hebrew *remes*, "creeping animals", *pace* J. C. de Moor, *Studies in the New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra*, II, UF 2 (1970), 325.

²⁴ Except for the mention in the Succession Treaty, there is only onomastic evidence in Akkadian. Two names compounded with Aramish are mentioned on a tablet allegedly found at Rasm et-Tanjara, an obscure mound situated in the valley of the middle Orontes River. A third name with Aramish as theophorous element belongs to a merchant from Carchemish. See J.-M. Aynard and J. Nougayrol, *Une tablette néo-assyrienne de Syrie (?) et le dieu Aramis*, RA 65 (1971), 85-87. On Rasm et-Tanjara see H. Athanassiou, *Rasm et-Tanjara: A Recently Discovered Syrian Tell in the Ghab, Part I: Inventory of the Chance Finds*, 1977.

²⁵ *Pace* Barré, *The God-List*, 47-8.

²⁶ The god Bethel is unrelated to the biblical town Bethel, *pace* O. Eissfeldt, *Der Gott Bethel*, ARW 28 (1930), 1-30 = KS, 1, 1962, 206-33.

²⁷ M.-C. Astour, *Continuité et changement dans la toponymie antique de la Syrie du Nord*, in: *La toponymie antique: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 12-14 juin 1975*, 1977, 139.

²⁸ M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, Vol. 2, 1908, 323-4.

²⁹ H. Seyrig, *Altar dedicated to Zeus Betylos*, *Excavations at Dura-Europos*,

Preliminary Report of Fourth Season, eds. P. V. C. Baur, M. I. Rostovtzeff and A. R. Bellinger, 1933, 68-71 (= no. 168).

³⁰ See K. van der Toorn, Herem-Bethel and Elephantine Oath Procedure, *ZAW* 98 (1986), 282-285.

³¹ See P. Grelot, *Documents araméens d'Égypte*, LAPO 5, 1972, 464.

³² K. Beyer and A. Livingstone, Die neuesten aramäischen Inschriften aus Taima, *ZDMG* 137/2 (1987), 285-296, esp. 287-288.

³³ See also N. Aimé-Giron, *Textes araméens d'Égypte*, 1931, 113-117.

³⁴ See Aimé-Giron, *Textes araméens d'Égypte*, no. 99:1; A. Dupont-Sommer, "Bêl et Nabû, Šamaš et Nergal" sur un ostracon araméen inédit d'Éléphantine, *RHR* 128 (1944), 28-39; E. Bresciani and M. Kamil, *Le lettere aramaiche di Hermopoli*, 1966, no. 1:1. See also J. B. Segal, *Aramaic Texts from North Saqqâra*, 1983, nos. 30:7 ([...] 'bd nbw 'lh' [...]); 182:1 (?); XVI 1.

³⁵ Bresciani and Kamil, *Le lettere aramaiche*, nos. 1:7; 2:1.12; 3:1.

³⁶ K. Deller, STT 366: Deutungsversuch 1982, *Assur* 3/4 (1983), 139-153, esp. 142.

³⁷ K. Deller, STT 366: Deutungsversuch 1982, 142.

³⁸ Following a suggestion by E. Lipiński (SKN et SGN dans le sémitique occidental du nord, *UF* 5 [1973], 202-203), Succoth-Benoth must probably be interpreted as "an image of Banit".

³⁹ See the edition by I. Kottsieper, Anmerkungen zu Pap. Amherst 63, *ZAW* 100 (1988), 217-244.

⁴⁰ S. P. Vleeming and J. W. Wesseliuss, *Studies in Papyrus Amherst* 63, 1985, 7.

⁴¹ A. Dupont-Sommer, "Bêl et Nabû, Šamaš et Nergal" sur un ostracon araméen inédit d'Éléphantine, *RHR* 128 (1944), 28-39 [= Collection Clermont-Ganneau, no. 277]. For a reference to "Bel his god" in an Aramaic letter from Saqqara, see J. B. Segal, *Aramaic Texts from North Saqqâra*, 1983, no. 23 r. 5.

⁴² S. Dalley, Yahweh in Hamath in the 8th Century BC: Cuneiform Material and Historical Deductions, *VT* 40 (1990), 21-32. See for a largely sympathetic response Z. Zevit, Yahweh Worship and Worshipers in 8th-Century Syria, *VT* 41 (1991), 363-366 [in some of the Aramaean kingdoms Yahweh worship was accepted as the cult of a minority group].

⁴³ See J. D. Hawkins, Izrijau, *RLA* 5 (1976-80), 227.

⁴⁴ See J. D. Hawkins, Jau-bi'di, *RLA* 5 (1976-80), 272-73.

⁴⁵ For a survey of the inscriptional evidence see J. D. Hawkins, Hamath, *RLA* 4 (1972-75), 67-70.

⁴⁶ The authenticity of the Lucianian addition ("and where are the gods of the land of Samaria?") is debated; see for a discussion with references to relevant literature M. Anbar, *καὶ ποῦ εἰσὶν οἱ θεοὶ τῆς χώρας Σαμαρείας* "et où sont les dieux du pays de Samarie?", *BN* 51 (1990), 7-8.

⁴⁷ E. Lipiński, An Israelite King of Hamat?, *VT* 21 (1971), 371-373. Dalley judges that this analysis "has no factual basis" (p. 27 note 18).

⁴⁸ See for the spellings J. D. Hawkins, Jau-bi'di, *RLA* 5 (1976-80), 272-73.

⁴⁹ Cf. the largely similar analysis by M. Weippert, apud B. Becking, *De ondergang van Samaria*, 1985, 58 (reference courtesy B. Becking, University of Utrecht). Cf. also the Ugaritic name ¹*Bi-di-i-lu* in *Ugaritica* 5 (1968), 121 no. 39:7.

⁵⁰ M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB 11, 1988, 166.

⁵¹ See M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 1985, 71-72.

⁵² Kottsieper, Anmerkungen zu Pap. Amherst 63, *ZAW* 100 (1988), 243.

⁵³ See D. O. Edzard and M. Gallery, Kutha, *RLA* 6 (1980-83), 384-387.

⁵⁴ Thus Becking, *De ondergang van Samaria*, 113-114 (with references to further lit.).

⁵⁵ See E. Lipiński, SKN et SGN dans le sémitique occidental du nord, *UF* 5 (1973), 202-203.

⁵⁶ J. Day, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 1989, 44-46.

⁵⁷ W. Röllig, Eine neue phoenizische Inschrift aus Byblos, *NESE* 2 (1974), 1-15.

⁵⁸ S. M. Paul, Sargon's Administrative Diction in II Kings 17²⁷, *JBL* 88 (1969), 73-74.

⁵⁹ I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs*, 1984, 105-111.

⁶⁰ A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 1923, no. 22 vii 122-124.

⁶¹ Cf. P. Grelot, *Documents araméens d'Égypte*, LAPO 5, 1972, 365.

⁶² A. Dupont-Sommer, "Bêl et Nabû, Šamaš et Nergal" sur un ostracon araméen inédit d'Éléphantine, *RHR* 128 (1944), 38.

⁶³ B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 1968, 18.

⁶⁴ M. H. Silverman, Aramean Name-Types in the Elephantine Documents, *JAOS* 89 (1969), 691-709.

⁶⁵ Silverman, Aramean Name-Types, 692 and n. 3.

⁶⁶ A. Dupont-Sommer, "Bêl et Nabû, Šamaš et Nergal" sur un ostracon araméen inédit d'Éléphantine, *RHR* 128 (1944), 28-39.

⁶⁷ D. Pardee, Les textes para-mythologiques de la 24^e campagne (1961), *Ras Shamra-Ougarit* IV, 1988, 103. The identification has recently been contested by Saul M. Olyan, Some Observations Concerning the Identity of the Queen of Heaven, *UF* 19 (1987), 161-174. The Aramaic texts from Egypt do not really allow of a different identification, however. It is hardly conceivable that Ishtar would be the West Semitic Queen of Heaven. Asherah and Astarte are unlikely candidates too, because it cannot really be explained why Jeremiah would call one of them "Queen of Heaven" whereas they are systematically referred to by their proper name elsewhere in the Bible.

⁶⁸ Some 35 years ago, Cyrus H. Gordon suggested that the Jews of Elephantine came from an "offshoot of Judah planted in Aram during the united monarchy" (The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine, *JNES* 14 [1955], 56-58, quotation from p. 56). The hypothesis leaned heavily on the equation Yaudi = Judah, now definitely proven erroneous. Gordon was right, however, when he observed that the religion of the Jews in Elephantine was quite unlike Jewish religion.

⁶⁹ I wish to record a debt of gratitude to Peggy Day (Winnipeg) and Jonas C. Greenfield (Jerusalem) who commented on an earlier draft of this paper. Responsibility for the views here expressed lies entirely with the author.

THE PROBLEM OF LITERACY IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

Review article

- Aleida und Jan Assmann, Christof Hardmeier (Hg.), *Schrift und Gedächtnis. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation I.* Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München 1983; 284 p.; ISBN 3 7705 2132 3;
- Aleida und Jan Assmann (Hg.), *Kanon und Zensur. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation II.* Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München 1987; 347 p.; ISBN 3 7705 2379 2;
- Aleida Assmann (Hg.), *Weisheit. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation III.* Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München 1991; 571 p.; ISBN 3 7705 2655 4;
- Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies.* Cambridge University Press 1968; 350 p.; ISBN 0 521 29005 8 (pbk. 1975);
- Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society.* Cambridge University Press 1986; 213 p.; ISBN 0 521 33962 6 (pbk.);
- William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word. Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion.* Cambridge University Press 1987; 306 p.; ISBN 0 521 33176 5;
- Wolfhart Heinrichs (Hg.), *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft.* Band 5. ORIENTALISCHES MITTELALTER. Aula Verlag, Wiesbaden 1990; 589 p.; ISBN 3 89104 053 9.
- Bernhard Lang (Hg.), *Das tanzende Wort. Intellektuelle Rituale im Religionsvergleich.* Kösel Verlag, München 1984; 117 p.; ISBN 3 466 20264 7.

In the sixties a study by J. Goody and I. Watt 'The Consequences of Literacy' (in J. Goody 1968 p. 27-68) indicated literacy as a problem for the first time. The authors raised doubts about the beliefs in the progress from oral to written memory. They noticed, instead, a deep break between both media of expression. Writing down oral traditions has revolutionary consequences for the whole society in which it happens. Since then this thesis has kept scholars of different academic affiliations busy and steadily attracted more attention. J. Goody has systematically described "The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society" in 1986. In this study he showed how through writing implicit matters are made explicit. Customs previously based on implicit knowledge became by writing explicit rules requiring explanations for their existence and reasons for their authority. Goody outlined the impact writing has had for the organization of social action in economy, polity and

law. In particular he deals in this context with religion (p. 1-44). Flexibility was a major characteristic of oral religions. It rendered them open to internal change as well as to external influences. "What difference does it make when the word, as in Judaism, Islam and Christianity, is written in a book (or an array of books) rather than being just the word of mouth, the spoken tongue?" he asks. In African tribal societies, for example, religion is defined in terms of practices and beliefs of a particular group of territorially bound individuals. Compared with these religions literate religions recognize some kind of autonomous boundary. They are generally religions of conversion, not simply religions of birth (p. 4f). Instead of merely reflecting the social system they influence it in a variety of significant ways (p. 22). Religions—as well as other social institutions—acquire by means of literacy some kind of independence. Specialists are required for interpreting holy Writ and lay people can substantiate social demands by referring to it. Goody is particularly concerned about the social consequences of literacy. For this reason he stresses the dramatic rupture between oral and written means of communication.

A group of German scholars brought together by Aleida and Jan Assmann (Heidelberg) have adopted Goody's point of view as their own. In the same manner as archeologists are interested in the different layers of buried cultures this group of scholars belonging to different disciplines has tried to detect the different layers of literary communication. Their starting point was the assumption of Goody, that there is a fundamental tension between oral speech and written word. One of the editors, A. Assmann, opens her contribution by maintaining: "Speaking and writing are separate worlds" ("Reden und Schreiben sind durch eine Welt voneinander getrennt" Vol. 1 p. 175). In an epilogue to the first volume the editors systematically deal with the relation between writing and memory. There are cultures without writing but no cultures without memory. Writing and memory codify reality in a completely different way (p. 268). Preliterate cultures always reconstruct their collective memory from the perspective of the present. The past has no status of its own but is dependent on the homeostasis between the present society and its frame of reference (vol. 2 p. 16). Literate cultures on the contrary accumulate their memory of the past. Due

to this fact they are able to return to it. Writing and memory are for this reason not equivalent. By maintaining this the editors refer to—what they call— “an axiom of the European culture” (Vol. 1 p. 265). It says that the border between the fluid and the fixed, between the life and its substitute, the spirit and the tin runs exactly between speaking and writing. They give Plato as reason for their view and start their whole project with a translation of a part of his ‘Phaidros’ (274c-278b). This dialogue exposes Plato’s doubts regarding the supremacy of written over oral communication. In it Socrates explains why the written word does not take precedence over the spoken one. It resembles in some respects pictured images that only give the impression of life. But if you ask them a question, they remain silent. Written words react in the same way. You may believe that they speak as rational beings. But in fact they always tell you the same thing (Vol. 1 p. 8). Lucidity can be acquired only by oral teaching, not by silently reading texts. The written words circulating in the world always need the help of the spoken ones. The well-known philosopher of hermeneutics, H.-G. Gadamer, comments on this view of Plato in a short contribution (“Unterwegs zur Schrift?”). ‘Phaidros’, he says, makes literacy a problem, since it lacks the informed reflection (“kundige Vorblick”) of the addressee. This, on the contrary, is a mark of speech (p. 13). The opinion of Plato is taken for granted though some critical reflection on it would certainly be proper. Plato’s opinion cannot be detached from the preference he gives to the dialogue as literary form. For the editors it seems of primary importance to bring together English social anthropology and German hermeneutics in a coalition against a naive belief in the supremacy of literacy in human communication. Literacy as problem: this is the core of the three volumes that have appeared until now.¹

The participants of the group are specialists in different fields and so they approach the issue from diverse scientific traditions. Of particular importance for their undertaking is the begin of writing. Its roots lay in Egypt and elsewhere in the necessities of everyday life, in particular the economy (K. Ehlich; W. Rösler). But literature transcended these purely instrumental aims and constituted a world of meaning of its own. J. Assmann traces the rise of literature in ancient Egypt and indicates its relationship with

sepulchral inscriptions. After the break-down of the central power of the Pharaoh, meaning of life was attributed also to ordinary people. When the central authority had been restored again there was a shift in the meaning attributed to this individual life from external categories to moral ones such as justice, virtue, character, knowledge and ability. The Egyptian literature is part of a reaction to the problem of meaning in individual life. The third volume addressing the subject 'wisdom' explores this context separately.

The second volume on canon and censorship sharpens the problem of literacy. What happens to society, it asks, if it gives its traditions the form of a closed and obligatory corpus? In their introduction J. and A. Assmann analyse the widespread misunderstanding that traditions themselves take care of their continuity. In fact creeping change ("schleichender Wandel") is normal. The stability of tradition is not the rule, but the exception and therefore to be explained. At least six times in human history complexes of traditions have become resistant to slow changes: in ancient Egypt, in Confucian China, in Hinduism, in Buddhism, in Judaism (Christianity and Islam included) and in the European humanism (Vol. 2 p. 7). "In these areas of tradition time is eliminated (ausgeschaltet)" (p. 7). This fact was the result of special efforts. Censorship, cultivation of texts and cultivation of meaning ("Textpflege und Sinnpflege") became institutions that transformed traditions into an obligatory canon. The editors also subsume classical tradition under the notion of canon (Vol. 2 p. 25 ff. 3). The broad spectrum of the content of all volumes reflects this assumption. But in their argument different phenomena are connected: the codification of traditions for example in the famous Codex Hammurapi or in the biblical book of Deuteronomy; the canonisation of writings as in Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Islam and other religions; and the rise of a classical corpus of writings as happened in European humanism. I would like to place a questionmark behind a fusion of such distinct matters into one category called 'canon'. For analytical reasons the three phenomena are better kept apart.

Under the heading "canon and the stabilisation of cultural meaning" F. Crüsemann, A. M. Ritter, K. Bruhn and T. Grimm deal with Jewish, Christian, Indian and Chinese cases. C. Colpe

adds a contribution distinguishing strictly between the sacralisation of texts and the canonisation of writings. He put forward a bold thesis: While sacralisation of texts happened worldwide, all canonisations can be traced to two independent origins: the Buddhist and the Jewish one (Vol. 2 p. 84 with an illustration on p. 88). Under the heading of "Censorship or the Cultivation of Cultural Memory" ("Zensur oder die Arbeit am kulturellen Gedächtnis") B. Gladigow, H. Cancik, H. Cancik-Lindemeier, J. Martin and A. Goldberg present examples of ancient history of religions.

The third volume deals with "wisdom". Wisdom means search for a concrete truth and is therefore independent of writing. To organize the contributions to this bulky volume (571 pages) A. Assmann developed in her crucial introduction an ingenious typology called a compass of wisdom. Besides the Biblical king Salomo she chooses figures from Shakespeare to represent different kinds of wisdom: Salomo stands for the political, Prospero for the magical, Jacques for the critical and Polonius for the fatherly wisdom. These four kinds of wisdom are studied across all times and cultures. Among these contributions again some are of particular relevance for the history of religion. I would like to mention at least the articles by B. Gladigow, T. Sundermeier, B. Lang, H. Cancik, H. Cancik-Lindemaier, J. Assmann and H. von Stietencron.

The historian of religion will find intriguing and fascinating articles in all three volumes. I would like to restrict myself to one aspect. A. Goldberg, scholar in Judaic studies, proposes to interpret rabbinic literature as written speech-acts (vol. 1 p. 123-140). Behind the well-known formula: "Rabbi NN said..." lies the dogma (or fiction) of an oral law (tora). This view modifies in a convincing way the dichotomy between written words and oral speech. Because oral and literary means of communication are different in kind, the authors of written texts are forced to solve the problem of being rightly understood. They do so by using familiar oral forms. The Jewish halakha, expressed in the form of speech-acts, therefore, reveals the dependence of written forms on established oral communication. It also reveals the pressure that orality can exert on literary forms even in a literate society. This is by no means an

exception. The Islamic Hadith-literature likewise testifies to this fact. The same holds true for Gnostic literature (as C. Colpe has demonstrated in a contribution to the “*Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*”, edited by W. Heinrichs).

Besides C. Colpe other well-known scholars in Jewish and Islamic studies as W. A. Graham, Chr. Bürgel, B. Flemming, A. Schimmel, J. Maier—to mention only these—have also contributed to this “*Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*”. They place ancient and Islamic religions in the context of a history of literature. W. A. Graham has indicated (in his “*Beyond the Written Word. Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*”) the unbroken oral dimension in the history of religions with a holy Writ. Also the written word can remain fundamentally oral. By choosing this point of view Graham assesses critically the impact of religious writings. “The relationship to the spoken word is inherently dynamic and personal in a way that the relationship to the printed word alone is not” (p. 155). He therefore directs the attention to the mutual impacts of orality and literacy. B. Lang pursued a similar approach. “Intellectual rituals” do not only control the reception of texts, but also the production of them. All these studies, sensitive to the fundamental problem of literacy—to be rightly understood without the aid of the spoken word—demonstrate that texts are forced to anticipate the reception of readers or listeners—more than the verdict of H.-G. Gadamer quoted above seems to allow.

The important volumes of the Assmanns suggest a new area for development in the study of religions. The research in this field moves in the direction of a nearly unknown territory on the map of religions: the literary forms used by the great religions. Long ago J. Wach deplored the dangers deriving from a subjective psychological approach to religions. In the appendix to his book “*Religionswissenschaft. Prolegomena zu ihrer wissenschaftlichen Grundlegung*” (Leipzig 1924 p. 193-205) he demanded research in the objective symbolic forms expressing religions. The studies on literacy are a serious attempt to meet this demand.

¹ A fourth one on “Commentary” is in preparation.

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS AND
SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

*A Report on the NAASR/IAHR Conference
University of Vermont August 4-10, 1991*

E. THOMAS LAWSON

The North American Association for the Study of Religion hosted a special conference of the International Association for the History of Religions at the University of Vermont in August, 1991. Supported by generous grants from the Council of European Studies, the International Research and Exchanges board, and the Universities of California at Santa Cruz, Toronto and Vermont, thirty scholars representing the associations for the study of religion in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy met with those from Latin America, the United States of America, and Canada to discuss the issue of religious transformations and socio-political change. Of particular concern were the religious and political changes (and the connections between these) occurring in Eastern Europe and Latin America. In addition, there were presentations on historical models for the relationship between religion and politics as well as the theoretical and methodological implications of these relationships for the academic study of religion. The papers presented at the conference will be published under the editorship of Luther Martin.

The conference raised important questions about and fostered continuing discussion on a number of points: the importance of definition in the contemporary study of religion, the role that religion played in society, the vital connection between the distribution and possession of "power", on the one hand, and the presence and effect of "religion" on the other.

Future NAASR conferences are being planned for Mexico (in cooperation with the Latin American Association for the Study of Religion), the United States and Canada. Future special or regional IAHR conferences are scheduled for Beijing, Harare, Paris and St. Petersburg/Leningrad.

BOOK SURVEY

R. J. Z. WERBLOWSKY

History of Religions: Christianity

Prof. Flusser's work on the parables of Jesus has already been mentioned in these pages (NUMEN xxxv, 1988: 141-2). Since then more publications from his fertile pen have appeared—mostly collections of previously published articles which, however, by their cumulative weight, build up to a sustained argument. Not all the 17 chapters deal with dominical *logoi* proper¹ e.g., the artt. on Josephus, the *Sanctus* and *Gloria*, the Jewish roots of the liturgical use of the *trishagion* etc. The author's battle-cry is "consequent philology", which is a not so implicit criticism of most (non-Jewish) N. T. scholarship for its incapacity of total immersion in the Jewish sources and hence its fatal lack of an "inside" understanding of Jesus's background. In brief: current academic N.T. scholarship is less philologically sound than it pretends to be. Flusser finds traces of the original judeo-christian *Quelle* also in later, anti-Jewish, text-redactions (e.g., Matthew and John) and he certainly sheds surprising new light on many traditional conundrums. To understand Flusser's approach the reader might well start with ch. 11 on the original significance of the exclamation *ecce homo*. It is nevertheless interesting to note that in the introductory chapter the historian-philologist Flusser programmatically presents the "Observations of a Jew on Christian Theology of Judaism".

The 700pp. volume *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*² is based on the same methodological assumptions and even more wide-ranging in scope. Some of its discussions of details are surprisingly illuminating. Much space is devoted to the Essenes and the "Dead Sea" (i.e., Qumran) Community and their relation to the N.T. The author's range is illustrated by e.g., "A Quotation from the Ghatas in a Christian Sybilline Oracle" or "Abraham and the Upanishads". Underlying Flusser's method is an assumption that will always be a matter of dispute: in order to reconstruct the Jewish background of early Christianity, and especially of Jesus, you have to resort to admittedly much later rabbinic literature and claim that these texts contain relevant traditions and information about earlier periods. Before dismissing this approach as naive and uncritical, the reader should ponder the late rabbinic source adduced by the author,

which throws new light on a detail in the vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22-3 "no temple in the city"). To say that this volume is stimulating would be a gross understatement.

Of course we knew, long before Flusser, all about the onesidedness of N.T. research and its "blatant ignorance of the Jewish context of the N.T. and its literary sources" (H.-J. Becker). Even Strack-Billerbeck was mainly used as a foil, opposing the naturally superior N.T. to the (only apparently) similar rabbinic texts. There were, of course, a few lonely voices in the wilderness, but they did not affect the overall character of N.T. research. As late as 1983 the Oxford scholar Geza Vermes still found it necessary to remind his colleagues that if the N.T. is envisaged "not as standing apart from Judaism and above it but as organically bound up with it, [then] the stages of [Jewish] religious thought preceding it and following it are not merely relevant but *essential* to an historical understanding and evaluation of the message, including its originality and peculiarity". H.-J. Becker's study³ is a practical application of this thesis. The author furnishes one more illustration of the truism that familiarity with Jewish and rabbinic sources may be as (if not more) important than a knowledge of Greek for an understanding of the traditions and redaction-processes underlying the N.T. texts. The bibliography shows how much the author owes to the "Jerusalem School" of N.T. studies, and his—on the surface apparently "narrow"—limitation to Mt. 23: 1-12 has much wider implications: even the anti-pharisaic polemical passages are closely interwoven with contemporary rabbinic thought. "He that has ears to hear, let him hear".

Historians with sociological inclinations often amuse themselves by asking what makes people give certain names to certain periods. What kind of mentality declares the centuries between the fall of Rome and the discovery of America to be "middle"? Surely neither Ibn Sina, nor Maimonides, nor Thomas Aquinas were aware of being medieval thinkers. After the return from the Babylonian exile there began, for the Jews, the "Second Temple Period". In Christian retrospective there was nothing of inherent value in this period. It was the "middle ages" between the Old and New Testaments and hence christened the "intertestamentary" period. The period, it is true, produced an enormous literature, part of which is classified under the heading "Old Testament Apocrypha". Among these is a text known as "The Apocalypse of Moses" or "The Life of Adam and Eve". Whether the author was Jewish or Christian and whether the original language was a Semitic one we do not know. There are Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic versions, but the two most important ones are the Latin (which was used for the English

translation in Sparks, *Apocryphal Old Testament*; see NUMEN xxv, 1988: 140) and the Greek (one ms. of which was published by Tischendorf in 1866). D. A. Bertrand of the CNRS has used 21 mss., and established for the first time a philologically solid critical text of the Greek *Life*.⁴ The very full apparatus criticus, notes, commentary, and analysis of both form and content make this a model of philological *akribia*, even if it does not revolutionise our understanding of the “intertestamentary” period. The 8 plates (including front cover) are an added pleasure.

The history of late antiquity was usually written (ignoring for the moment Gibbon and his animus) by the heirs of rising and triumphant Christianity. The decline, loss of power, and ultimate persecution of paganism was treated accordingly. Pierre Chuvin’s little book,⁵ as engagingly written as it is erudite, looked at this chapter of history from the perspective of the defeated. It is not easy to define the adjective “pagan”—much depends on the purpose for which it is used—but the author does it sufficiently well to provide a backbone for the rest of the book. For a time the Empire was “in search of a religion”. Constantine’s victory was followed by a wavering 4th cent. at the end of which pagans, and pagan religiosity, found themselves successively under interdict, defeat, and political exclusion. Both in the fragmented West and in the tenacious East paganism, in spite of a certain occasional appeal, could not maintain itself. Perhaps the Palestinian city of Gaza (Procopius!) is as good an example as any. In an interesting historical analogy, very much to the point although apparently far-fetched, the author compares the fate of Hypatia and Pamprepus to that of the later German court-Jews: you cannot, with impunity, be both influential and at the same time marginal. The pagan heritage made its comeback in the 15th cent. Its bearer was a Byzantine “Christian” who died shortly before the fall of Constantinople but who could count Cardinal Bessarion and Marsilio Ficino among his pupils. He himself was the disciple of a paganising Jew named Elissaïos. The name of Elissaïos’s faithful disciple? You’ve guessed it: Gemistos plethon.

In the large body of Christian anti-pagan polemic, Tertullian’s *de idolatria* figures as a classic, provided we bear in mind that the work is addressed not to pagans but to Christians, warning them against the dangers of (religious) paganism. The fine edition by Waszink and van Winden⁶ offers the reader a critical text (pp.22-71) with English translation facing every page of text, a valuable introduction (pp.1-18), and an exhaustive, substantive as well as text-critical commentary (pp.73-296). The work is based on the original Ph.D. dissertation of the late Prof. P.

G. van der Nat of Leiden University, but goes beyond it in scope, contents and method. The exact date of the composition of *de idolatria* is of more than mere editorial interest, because the question is not simply one of correct dating but rather of determining whether the author is the Montanist or pre-Montanist Tertullian. The editors agree with van der Nat's pre-Montanist dating. This is a classical edition of a classical patristic text.

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-c.410) is one of those Roman administrators and poets whose life and writings reflect the transition of the pagan to the Christian world. His didactic rather than inspired hymns are of an essentially apologetic character (doctrine of the incarnation, against Marcion, against pagan revivals, in praise of martyrs). Of considerable influence on later Christian metaphor was his *Psychomachia* in which asceticism is described under the allegory of spiritual warfare. The importance of this model—from the early *militia Christi* (see also the Rule of St. Benedict) to the *Enchiridion militis christiani* of Erasmus—need not be spelled out here. The religiosity of this thoroughly “Roman” Christian, articulating itself in the polarity between *pietas christiana* and *pietas romana*, is the subject of a fine study by Marianne Kah.⁷ The short account of his life and work, and of his evaluation by later scholarship, followed by a longer account of his place in his politico-cultural context, would by themselves make this study a valuable contribution. Pt. iii on the theology and spirituality of Prudentius is valuable too. However for one reader at least the most fascinating chapters are those on the *Imperium Romanum* as an *Imperium Religiosum* and on “Roman ideology and political religiosity” or, in other words, on “the Roman Christian as *homo politicus* and Christ himself as a *deus romanus*”. The study can be read without hesitation also by good Catholics, since it carries an ecclesiastic *imprimatur*.

A talmudic idiom speaks of occasions that are “a feast-day for scholars”. I trust that the ancient rabbis won't object to the use of this idiom in connection with Judith Herrin's splendid and impressive achievement.⁸ The author integrates within the grand sweep of this wide-ranging study also earlier researches that have already established her reputation (e.g., the role played by the confrontation with Islam and its ban on images for Byzantine Christianity in particular and for the development of the iconoclast crisis, as compared to the pictorial tradition evolved by the western church). The result is a brilliant account of the emergence of the entity called “Christendom”. The capacity to combine the “grand view” of wide historical perspectives with impeccable erudition and scrupulous attention to detail make this book a very unique contribution. Something decisive happened in “late antiquity”, and from the cradle of the mediterranean world there emerged something that was to

become “Europe”. The question is what exactly was this “Europe” and what factors contributed to its emergence. The answer to the latter question is: the Christian faith, but the telling of the story requires competence not only in doctrinal squabbles and the history of Councils, but also the capacity to see these as powerful political agents. On the one hand the concept of “Christendom” can legitimately be used in the singular. On the other hand, especially when viewed from the inside, there are Christendoms. Of the latter the author is well aware (6th cent. “churches”; “the Visigothic alternative”; “The Roots of Christian Diversity”; “From Schism to Division”; “Divergent Paths”; “The Two Emperors of Christendom”). Byzantine Christendom beginning long before the rise of Islam but crystallising with Islam at its borders; the West, decisively shaped by Pope Gregory and crystallising under the Carolingians—one could hardly wish for a wider sweep. Historians cannot help being “hung up” on dates, and hence at least one reader would like to discuss with the author whether “Christendom”, and especially the “West”, does not really begin in the 4th century.

J. Neusner takes the 4th cent. i.e., the Constantinian age when the “West” began and when both Judaism and Christianity assumed what was to become their definitive and dominant shape until the dawn of the New West (i.e., modernity), as his starting point.⁹ History, including the history of religions, does not take place in a vacuum but in a socio-political reality. And in this case the reality was an inversion of previous realities: Judaism had ceased to be a political factor; Christianity, after having become first a *religio licita*, then the triumphant religion, had now become the dominant one. But their relationship was not simply one of explicit polemics or mutual disregard. After all, they co-existed in the same “reality” and, as Prof. Neusner shows, addressed—each in its own way—the same agenda (indicated in the subtitle). All this is fairly commonplace, and the megalomaniac style of proclaiming these truisms (“I claim”, “I argue”, “I maintain”, “it is my contention” etc.) may grate on the ears of more sensitive readers. But it would be a pity if for this or other reasons (e.g. the misleading addiction to metaphors like “dialogue”, or encounter, confrontation etc. for that matter) a reader would lay the book aside. Obviously two related and antagonistic religions, even when addressing analogous problems within the same framework of reality and aware of their mutual albeit asymmetrical presence, are not necessarily engaged in dialogue, encounter etc. (unless in a metaphorical sense). The book’s most stimulating aspect is the author’s correlation of the items on this agenda with representative texts: Midrash Rabba and Palestinian Talmud on the Jewish, Eusebius,

Chrysostom and Aphraates (the latter not exactly a representative of Byzantine Christianity) on the Christian side. In spite of the author's idiosyncrasies a stimulating book.

Pope Gregory's *Dialogues* were undoubtedly one of the most influential medieval books, or rather "bestsellers". They can be used even today by writers wishing to hold medieval Christianity and its faith in miracles up to ridicule (e.g., Bertrand Russell). Also Dr. Herrin seems to take their authenticity for granted (though proof to the contrary would not affect her argument). This proof to the contrary has been cogently and convincingly argued by Dr. Francis Clark¹⁰ in a major study which combines erudition with methodological sophistication. After defining the nature of the "riddle" of the work under discussion and surveying the history of scholarship and argument concerning it, the author painstakingly examines both the external (including the "eloquent silence" on the subject in Gregory's own age, the ms. evidence, the "problematic history" of early Benedictine monasticism, and the relationship of later Benedictine history to the spread of the *Dialogues*) and the internal (literary character, theological analysis of the undisputed Gregorian texts as compared to the *Dialogues*, historical discrepancies, style and vocabulary, the identification of borrowed post-Gregorian sources as well as of genuinely Gregorian insertions) evidence. One wonders how, after Dr. Clark's publication, it is still possible seriously to maintain the Gregorian authorship. A special *tour de force* is provided in the conclusion. Dr. Clark is not satisfied with proving the non-Gregorian authorship of the *Dialogues*. On the basis of his thorough study, he also tries to construct a "profile" of the anonymous author. This well-produced study is a feather in the cap not only of the author but also of the publisher, Messrs. Brill.

One of the most significant and influential developments in early, especially post-Constantinian, Christianity was the rise of monasticism. Renunciation, asceticism, holy virginity, the example and the sayings of the desert fathers, the spread of coenobitic monasticism—they all generated not only sanctity but also an immense scholarly literature. Prof. Brown, as always, does not merely contribute to scholarship. When he writes about a revolution, or calls something a revolution,¹¹ this in itself can constitute a revolution for his readers. What is a civilisation's relationship to the body? Asceticism and continence were not an invention of early Christianity, yet something absolutely new happened here. What made men and women espouse permanent renunciation, celibacy, lifelong virginity? What caused a minority of intelligent young men and women to bring about a sexual revolution and more, for their attitude to "the body" not merely sought a sexual revolution but a transformation

of self. Hence sex was not the exclusive problem: self-will and pride loomed perhaps even larger. And all this in a context that opposed encratism! The inevitable clash with the alternative and current ethics: the duty to perpetuate the family and its name, which Peter Brown so sensitively discusses, cannot but remind the comparative religionist of the similar contradiction experienced by Buddhism when it penetrated China with its cult of the family and of filial piety (including procreation) as the highest of all virtues. Ultimately life and death are at issue here. Is propagation of the species the only escape from death (for man no less than for the “selfish gene”) or is, as Brown suggests, sexual lust the ultimate cause of death, and renunciation the restitution of lost human freedom and lost immortality for the bearers of the new ideology? A generation busy celebrating not only constantly lowering academic standards but also another revolution, that of “sexual liberation”, badly needs both the awe-inspiring scholarship and the moving humaneness with which Peter Brown describes the attitude towards the body in this new social construction of spirituality which is, at the same time, a new social construction in a wider sense. The sociologist Brown clearly sees the implications of renunciation also for an understanding of the Christian family and its place in the new ecclesiastical hierarchisation of society. Like all books by Peter Brown, this one too is not to be reviewed, but a gift to be gratefully received.

Continence, chastity and asceticism are known to be necessary, though certainly not sufficient, preconditions of sainthood. Who becomes a saint, and how? When the sociologist rather than theologian asks the question, it means: what is the socially accepted image of sainthood, who is perceived as, and sometimes catapulted into, sainthood, and by whom? When does popular faith and social consensus even force the hand of the ecclesiastical authorities? There have been many statistical and social studies on the subject (e.g., how many men and women? what is the class background of the saints?). Surely the “upper class” viz. aristocratic saints are disproportionately numerous, at least in certain periods. Professors Weinstein and Bell¹² have enriched us with a solid piece of research which is a real contribution, not least because of the chronological limits it set itself. Within these limits it is as thorough as the subject-matter permits; the profile of the saint (childhood, adolescence, class, gender), geographical distribution, popular hagiography, papal documents and much more. Every generalisation is buttressed by statistical tables, giving membership in religious orders, occupational category, type of canonisation, lapse of time between death and canonisation, type of reputation and popularity, extent of cult, plus ever so many other variables. It is the kind of study of which we don’t have enough.

The fact that anti-Jewish polemics, textual as well as iconographic, is part of Christian religious (?) output has been addressed in NUMEN xxxv (1988): 145. The huge amount of publications on the subject (detailed studies of individual authors viz. texts, anthologies, wider ranging surveys, historical, theological and sociological monographs) can be gauged from the bibliography accompanying every paragraph in Schreckenberg's thesaurus of *adversus judaeos* writings.¹³ It is unreasonable to expect a "critical bibliography" which would have doubled the size of this hefty volume, and as a result inferior titles are listed next to important and authoritative ones. The snowballing of *adversus judaeos* texts in the later middle ages is well illustrated by the fact that vol. i (1982) covered the 1st to 11th centuries, whilst vol. 11, under review here, covers less than 150 years (the 4th Lateran Council, 1215, providing a convenient cut-off date) in more than 700 pages! There is little to be said about this volume except that it will probably establish itself as the standard collection of the relevant texts, and as a model of concise as well as critically and analytically precise treatment of the texts adduced. The historical horizon of the undertaking is exemplarily sketched in the Introduction pp.11-28. The volume does not limit itself to polemical texts but takes into account also iconography. (On iconography as a polemical technique see NUMEN xxxiv, 1987: 271-2). Some readers may miss certain authors (e.g. Ramon Lull) or iconographic motifs (e.g. *Die Judensau*; see Numen *loc. cit.*), but the author would certainly reply that these should be dealt with in a post-1215 volume (though Luther and the Reformation are mentioned several times). All future research on *adversus judaeos* literature will have to refer to Schreckenberg as a basic text.

Thomas Müntzer has always been considered as one of the most fascinating figures on the Reformation and Anabaptist scene, but the interest in him concentrated on his "later" (Zwickau, conflict with Luther, Peasants' War) period. He also occupies a place in modern utopian thought, thanks to the 1921 "manifesto" (rather than study)—reprinted in 1989—of the communist/atheist theologian and staunch Stalinist Ernst Bloch. U. Bubenheimer's awesomely erudite monograph¹⁴ for the first time does what no one did before: concentrate on the early Müntzer (origins, family and social background, education and studies, early activities as teacher and preacher). "Early" and "late" are, of course, relative terms since the year of his birth is unknown. The author's arbitrary but well-argued cut-off date is 1519, the year Müntzer finished his studies at Wittenberg. This very thorough and detailed study plus 70 pp. of sources shows that there is more to Müntzer's background than Hus or Joaquin of Fiore. Medieval mysticism and academic humanism

are also part of it, especially as Müntzer's social and intellectual background is not the poverty-stricken proletariat (*pace* Bloch) but the cultivated urban, humanist, *Bildungsbürgertum* of the period. The study provides further illustration of the immense blanks in our knowledge of historical figures of whom we had thought that everything that needed saying had been said.

Many decades ago Fülöp-Miller's *Macht und Geheimnis der Jesuiten* came near to being a bestseller. Indeed, the Jesuits have never failed to fascinate popular imagination. Popes were often afraid of them and suppressed the order, which continued to flourish under the patronage of Frederick the Great in Protestant Prussia and of Catherine the Great in Pravoslav Russia. The conspiratorial role played in Catholic paranoia by the Freemasons (and for antisemites by the Elders of Zion), was filled for non-Catholics by the Jesuits. Today Jesuits are heavily involved in Liberation Theology and other "progressive" and hence evil machinations of the devil who possibly also engineered the Second Vatican Council for his dark purposes. The message of Malachi Martin's brilliantly written book¹⁵ can be condensed in one sentence: in the last generation the Jesuits have turned from defenders of the papacy to its most dangerous enemy. The aim of this power-struggle is to destroy not only the Pope, the papacy and the hierarchical church, but also the democratic capitalism of the U.S. and the West. As a document illustrating the workings of the paranoiac mind of a former progressive Catholic turned *integriste*, this book makes fascinating reading.

So far the present Survey has confirmed the truth that most publications on Christianity (or at least those reaching a reviewer's desk) deal with the western church and its offsprings. The Eastern Churches, and even Byzantine Orthodoxy, are a kind of "exotic fringe". The post-Revolution Russian ecclesiastical establishments, first in Paris and then in the U.S., have made an effort to change this situation. Currently St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (abbreviated henceforth SVSP) is particularly active. A paperback translation of Ephrem Syrus' cycle of 15 Hymns on Paradise¹⁶ gives the reader a beautiful insight into one type of early Christian (4th cent.) spirituality. Here we have pure theological poetry, unencumbered by philosophical presuppositions and weaving its imagery round the Paradise narrative Gen. 1-2. St. Ephrem's vision beholds and expresses correspondences: between earth and heaven, the sacraments and the last things, and—underlying all—the Old and New Testaments. Nature and Scripture being both God's witnesses, also the material and spiritual worlds are not disjointed.

Jumping from the 4th to the 7th cent. we encounter Isaac of Nineveh

whom the English-reading public probably knows from Wensinck's fragmentary and partial translation (1923). But we must not forget that Wensinck was not so much interested in the Eastern Fathers as in their possible relevance to the study of Sufism. The SVSP ed. of *On Ascetical Life*¹⁷ certainly does not pretend to represent the whole of St. Isaac, but it is a valuable little paperback, not least because of the fine introduction pp. 7-23.

Father John Meyendorff, known from his studies of Palamas, and of early Greek monasticism and mystical theology, is always heavyweight stuff. In his 1981 Cambridge U.P. monograph, reprinted in 1989 as a paperback by SVSP,¹⁸ he addresses one of the most central problems in the history of Eastern Christianity: the rise of the "Third Rome". In other words, this is a book about the role of Byzantium (including her political, cultural and religious legacy; the 13th cent. Mongol invasions and other catastrophes; Hesychasm, its victory and its consequences for Byzantine Christianity and for the role of the Constantinople Patriarchate and much more) in the emergence of 14th century Moscow. When Russia began to crystallise as a nation, it was still part of the Mongol empire (politically) and a dependency of Constantinople (ecclesiastically). Byzantine church diplomacy had its interests in "pushing" Moscow, the princes of which, successors to the Princes of Kiev, fought a battle of supremacy against several competitors, more especially against the Grand Princes of Lithuania (which ultimately became part of the Roman Catholic [Polish] world). The Byzantine religious and monastic revival at the end of the 14th cent. gave a new impetus to Muscovite orthodoxy, the spiritual effects of which outlasted the change of political realities after 1500. There is hardly a book by Prof. Meyendorff that has not had its critics, but no one would deny that there is hardly a book from his pen that is not a powerful statement and a major contribution.

Sacred Space

Geographia Sacra, sacred space and holy sites have been addressed in NUMEN xxxvii (1990): 260-2. Christian pilgrimage centres are the subject of two recent publications which, in spite of their differences, share one quality: that of excellence. We are all familiar with Canon Wilkinson's fine and useful translations of a wide range of pilgrimage-accounts relating to early Christian and pre-Crusader Jerusalem and the Holy Land, not to speak of the ten volumes (1894-9) of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. Dr. P. Walker¹⁹ restricts the field of his enquiry to the 4th cent. (a key century, as has been emphasised earlier in this Survey), which

also means that the barrage of his formidable scholarship is more concentrated. The subtitle "Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century" fails to bring out an important aspect of this fine study, implicit in the main title and especially in the question-mark at its end. The author neatly (and rightly) distinguishes—especially in his discussion of Eusebius—between holy city and holy places. The two are clearly not the same though, as every historian of religion knows, some holy cities derive their holiness from the fact that they harbour holy objects or sites. The "negative", or at least reserved, attitude of early Christianity to Jerusalem, and the major change that occurred in the Constantinian age (Helena!) are old and hoary commonplaces. But also old and hoary commonplaces can benefit from painstakingly detailed scholarship, especially when it is of the quality of Dr. Walker's. And there is no harm in being reminded that the received wisdom of our generalisations is never the whole story. Things are usually far more complex and differentiated. The watershed date for Dr. Walker is 325, but also the account of the before and after (including Church Councils) make fascinating reading.

The literature on pilgrimage has been snowballing in recent years, for the subject includes much more than holy places and sites. Even without philosophical lucubrations on man as *homo viator*, there are the "motor aspects" of devotion, the desire of mobility (let us not forget that in many cases religious pilgrimage was—at least for the lower classes—the only legitimate reason for travelling), the lust and need of change, adventure, and interruption of normal routine, as well as other factors that make pilgrimage-research a focus of interest for sociologists and anthropologists no less than historians of religion. The sociological literature on even specific subjects e.g., the relationship pilgrimage/tourism, fills bookcases, especially as the situation of both pilgrim and tourist is one of "liminality", one of the "hot" topics in contemporary anthropology. Many of us were initiated into this fascinating subject (including the "cognitive consonance" of devotion and ribaldry) by a careful reading not of religious texts but of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The emblem of the German series titled *Jakobus-Studien* (a coquille St. Jacques) automatically directs our minds to Santiago and, indeed, vol. 4 of the series²⁰ deals with pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Santiago (the main centres of western pilgrimage) in the period between the Crusades and the Reformation, with a little bit of Rome thrown in for good measure. The book lists over 250 pilgrimage accounts. The better the scholarship the more boring it can often be. The author of *Devotion and Adventure*, in her treatment of the material, her analysis and discussions of the texts adduced, the problems

she raises and perspectives she opens up (in terms of history of ideas, of culture, of literature and of psychological attitudes) exemplifies the contrary. Her vivacity and sense of humour are infectious. The reader not only learns about late medieval pilgrimage but also receives a humanistic education. Chinese culture is often characterised as the most “literate”, but unfortunately neither Chinese nor Japanese and Indian (not to speak of Muslim) pilgrims have produced a similar variegated amount of travelogues. Whilst pilgrimage-research also in other culture areas is steadily increasing, the kind of research presented by Ms. Ganz-Blättler will, alas, in view of the material available, remain limited to Christianity. Inevitably the 15th cent. Friar Felix is also quoted, but the bibliographical reference is to the German version of Hilda Prescott’s *Jerusalem Journey* (London 1954; unknown to this reviewer) but no mention is made of Hilda F. M. Prescott’s delightful *Friar Felix At Large* 1950, 1960). V. Honemanns fine essay of Hans Rot’s pilgrimage (1440) could not be mentioned in the bibliography as it was not yet published when the author wrote her book.

History of Religions: Islam

For many students of religion the name of al-Ashari is synonymous with Islamic orthodoxy. No doubt there have always been theologians who considered themselves rather than Ashari as truly orthodox, but generally speaking the Asharite School that claims descent from him (not least through eloquent disciples like al-Baqillani and authoritative thinkers with impeccable credentials like al-Ghazzali) succeeded in establishing its centrality. There is not a single book on the history of Islamic theology that does not devote space to Ashari, yet he was never made the object of an exhaustive monograph. Even more strange is the fact that hardly any of his writings (said to number about 300, of which 99 titles are listed by ibn Asakir) has been preserved. His best-known work, the *Maqalat* is a compendium of contemporary views and opinions which tells us much about the climate of Islamic theology at the time, and little about Ashari’s own thought. To the few extant writings should be added those by his disciples, especially ibn Furak’s *Mujarrad* which has been made accessible by D. Gimaret, who also uses it as a major source for his great, and so far definitive, monograph.²¹ The introduction neatly summarises the textual situation, and after an opening chapter on Ashari’s basic categories proceeds to an encyclopedic and detailed exposition, in 33 chapters (pt. i The World; pt. ii God; pt. iii God and Human Destiny; pt. iv Law and Politics), of his teaching. Every reader will find some of his favourite items

missing from the bibliography e.g., the author's discussion of *'iman* and *mu'min* would have profited from a reference to Wilfred C. Smith. The scholarship embedded in this volume, which also integrates the author's previous Ashari research, is monumental and will be fully appreciated by specialists only.

It is hardly possible to think of Islamic Studies without associating in one's mind the name of one of the founding fathers of the discipline, a giant of almost mythological proportions, Ignac Goldziher (1850-1921). A good condensed account of his life and the significance of his work was given by J. Waardenburg (who had written on Goldziher before) in the *Encycl. of Religion* vol. 6: 73-4. Somewhat unusual for scholars at that period, Goldziher kept a diary which has been published. But a good monograph on the man and his work is still a desideratum, only partially filled by R. Simon.²² For the time being Simon's account, which was preceded by Somogyi's biographical chapter in vol. 1 of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, is the best we have, especially as it views its hero against the social and cultural background of Hungary at the time. A better one, not marred by communist jargon (*honi soit qui mal y pense*—the author still wrote under the inquisitorial eye of the regime) will, so one hopes, be forthcoming some day. Goldziher was also a great letter-writer: almost 14,000 letters from 1650 correspondents fill 45 boxes in the Budapest Academy Archives. The bulk of Simon's book is taken up (pp. 163-419, plus notes to the letters pp. 423-447) by a selection from the fascinating Goldziher/Nöldeke correspondence. No orientalist (the term is used here deliberately, *pace* Edward Said and diverse fellow-travellers of different ideological, allegedly "critical" but in fact faddish and stupid, persuasions) can afford to miss this book from his library. We hope that when a thoroughly revised and de-marxified edition is planned, the publishers will also provide an English-language style-editor.

San-chiao

The reviewer humbly begs the forgiveness of sinological colleagues for what they must consider a very bad joke. Non-sinologists should be informed that the standard term *san-chiao* (the "three religions" or "three doctrines"), in use in Chinese literature for over a thousand years, signifies what it says: the three traditional teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The Comparative Religionist will admit that, in the West, there is another set of three religions and that these too are no less worthy of study. The most recent "Abrahamitic" *san-chiao* publication²³ is conceived in an interesting, original and often stimulating

manner, though one cannot help wondering for whom these 1200 pages are intended. Perhaps teachers may find this anthology useful since it is organised around themes and therefore lends itself as reading material for a comparative look at selected topics. Vol. i “From Covenant to Community” gives texts (beginning with the Holy Scriptures viz. Holy Book) illustrating the history of the crystallisation of the three religious communities. Vol. ii deals with Scripture as such, its understanding, its relation to tradition, law and “new covenants”. Vol. iii (“The Works of the Spirit”) deals with worship, asceticism, mysticism, theology and eschatology. Inevitably in a work of such range every reader finds lots of things that please him, and lots to disagree with. Should the “Dead Sea” community really be described as “the monks of Qumran”?

History of Religions: India

An exciting volume edited by A. Hildebrandt has been praised in *NUMEN* xxxvii (1990): 264. Since then Hildebrandt has enriched us with an equally exciting volume of his own²⁴ which, focused as it is, nevertheless covers a wide range of material and problems without, however, losing its focus: traditional epics in general and the more specific questions of Mahabharata versions (and how much reliance to place on what passages) in particular; Krishna; myths and concepts of kingship and sovereignty; war and battle; “epic eschatology”, and much more. Though ostensibly a study of Krishna in the Mahabharata, teeming with challenging and occasionally controversial suggestions (e.g., the three Black Krishnas and their mediating function between red and white), the dynamics of the author’s scholarship generates an increasingly wide sweep and range. His highly original discussion takes off from the work not only of Indologists of the calibre of van Buitenen and Madeleine Biardeau (also Heesterman’s analyses of the dice-game and the significance of losing or winning a game are not overlooked), but also of macro-comparatists like Dumézil and Eliade, or anthropologists like Victor Turner. Hence Snorri Sturluson is relevant to the Mahabharata; Odinn, Baldr and Hodr are relevant to Yudishtira and Abhimanyu; and Scandinavian mythology in general (including eschatology and Ragnarök) is relevant to the Indian material. The author is not a blind but a critical, and therefore all the more persuasive, follower of Dumézil’s tri-structuralism. And since his subject-matter is epic literature (the Mahabharata analyzed comparatively in grand perspective), he can afford to be Dumézilian with impunity i.e., to ignore the thorny question of the trifunctional structure of Indo-European society. For many years this reviewer has maintained

(with many others) that even if the literary texts bear out the tripartite thesis, they do not yet justify the jump to actual tripartite social structure. But we end as we began: Hildebeitel's *Ritual Battle* is one of the most exciting among the many exciting studies in Indian religion that have appeared in recent years.

Staying with battles, or at least with warriors and violence, mention should be made of the excellent translation (from Telugu) by V.N. Rao of one of the most important 13th cent. Virashaiva (the 'heroid viz. militant Shaivas', also known as *lingayat*) texts, the Basava Purana—an anthology of legends and hagiographies of Virashaiva saints, and especially of Basaveshvara (12th cent.).²⁵ The author of the Purana, Palkuriki Somanatha, is revered as a saint by the sect and his writings are considered sacred scripture. The translation reads smoothly and fluently, and gives readers insight into a little-known religious tradition. Even by the standards of Indian religion, the religion of violence *par excellence* in a country of violence, Virashaiva religiosity can come as a bit of a surprise especially to those who think mainly in terms of *ahimsa*. The excellent introduction (pp.3-31) enables the reader to see the sect and the translated text in proper perspective. Velcheru Narayana Rao and Gene H. Roghair, and last but not least Princeton Univ. Press, are to be congratulated on this fine volume in the fine series "Princeton Library of Asian Translations" (see also NUMEN xxxiii, 1986: 255-6).

South India is generally considered, for good and valid reasons, a bastion of Hinduism (cf. the many publications on e.g., Tamil Hinduism reviewed in previous numbers of NUMEN). But a true story is not necessarily the whole story. Long before Iraqi Jews settled in Bombay and Calcutta, there was an ancient Jewish community in Cochin (Kerala on the Malabar coast). Of greater significance are the Muslim and Christian communities. By what agencies (traders, patronage of kings, charismatic influence of Muslim warrior-martyr pirs and Christian saints and gurus), and abetted by what circumstances, did these religions (we are talking here of later developments and not of the Malabar Thomas-Christians) not only push into South India but also cause large and influential groups to identify with them? India being the proverbial country of miracles, readers of Susan Bayly's excellent study of Muslims and Christians in South Indian society 1700-1900,²⁶ should not be surprised that this particular miracle owed much to the fact that many of their beliefs and practices derived their force from an "ambiguous relationship with the worship of Hindu goddesses, that is with the most important deities of what was becoming 'Hindu' South India". This solid and first-rate piece of research (archival material, interviews, shrine histories, popular ballads

and miracle-stories) is of relevance not only to Indian studies but also to the social history of conversion, and more generally of change, in colonial societies.

The market for popular books, mostly paperbacks, on the Buddha and Buddhism seems to be insatiable. In this respect we may trust the judgment of publishing houses (cf. NUMEN xxxi (1984): 143-5 and xxxiii (1966): 258). Whether the "historical Buddha" can be recovered at all is almost as much of a teaser as the historical Jesus; see NUMEN xxxiii (1986): 257. If anyone has the qualifications (the knowledge of both historical background and recoverable historical facts, *religionswissenschaftliche* insight into the subject-matter, fluency of pen, and gift of *haute vulgarisation*) to risk yet another pocketbook on the Buddha, it is surely Prof. Klimkeit,²⁷ well-known, *inter alia*, for his researches in later Buddhist history in Central Asia (see his article in NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 53-89). In fact, his specialisation is directly hinted at by the frontispiece: a picture from one of the Central Asian "Buddhist caves". The reader for whom the book is intended should be more than satisfied, and also the non-layman will find the notes and bibliography helpful.

Although, strictly speaking, outside the borders of India, two interesting Buddhist studies, different from each other in approach, method and subject-matter, should be mentioned here. The volume edited by Sizemore and Swearer²⁸ on Theravada social ethics will be read with profit in spite of the fact that a much better volume would have been possible. The study, though priding itself on its "inside" understanding of its subject, is conceived in what is ultimately a western and Christian perspective. "It has at times been assumed [when exactly and by whom, apart from 19th cent. missionary polemics?] that Buddhism [being completely "otherworldly"] ... entail[s] a wholly negative view of the world and wealth". Hence the contrast sangha/laity was [wrongly said to be] one of "two Buddhisms". (In actual fact there are not two but three types viz. levels of Buddhism; see Bechert, M. Spiro and others). You won't believe it, but really and truly "all of the authors of this volume find this approach ... simplistic and misleading", and all this without having seriously come to grips with Max Weber (in spite of appearances to the contrary), Heinz Bechert and others. Certainly a reference to Bechert's *magnum opus* as well as to his chapter "Die Ethik der Buddhisten" in the volume (1984) edited by Peter Antes would not have done any harm. The misconceptions corrected by this book are due, in part, so we are told, to conditioned-reflex comparisons with Christian monasticism. The author of the chapter on this particular subject seems to be innocent and unaware of important earlier work (e.g., Ilana Friedrich-Silber's "Opting-Out in

Theravada Buddhism and Medieval Christianity: a Comparative Study of Monasticism as an Alternative Structure'', *Religion* xv, 1985—a summary of a much larger earlier study). Still, the volume repays reading as the questions of the relationship of individual spiritual perfection to social well-being, the conception of charity, donors and *dana*, monastic wealth and much more bear repetition in different wordings, and their discussion, even if irritatingly simplistic because thinking of itself as original and innovative, is always stimulating.

Flying, in the manner of gods, arhants and Chinese immortals, from Theravada-land in the south to Nepal to the north of India, we should reach for the impressive and brilliant cultural and political history of Sherpa Buddhism by Prof. Sherry Ortner (who has written on Sherpas before).²⁹ What brought about the rise of celibacy and the founding of monasteries among Sherpas early in this century? What circumstances precipitated this protest, in the religious idiom of Buddhist "High Religion", against popular viz. folk village-religion? The book is packed with detailed accounts and analyses: the "big" and the "small" people—who exactly are they? What are the roles of wealth and the mechanisms of its acquisition? Who are the monks and nuns i.e., the "alienated" individuals motivated to choose this path? Which political and cultural factors play a role in the founding of temples? What are the various contradictions underlying social and religious processes (the core contradiction in Sherpa society being 'egalitarian' and hierarchical)? This is a fascinating example of the achievements possible when an eminent anthropologist integrates anthropological and historical modes of analysis.

History of Religions: East Asia

The Hobogirin-Institute (i.e., the Kyoto branch of the EFEO) and vol. 1 (1985) of its most recent venture, the *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, have come in for praise in NUMEN xxxiii (1986): 262. The subsequent numbers of this annual left no doubt that no matter how enthusiastic a reviewer's praise, it would always be an understatement. Vols. 4 (1988, 254 pp.), and 5 (1989-90, 466 pp.)³⁰ are Taoist Studies presented as an *hommage* to Max Kaltenmark, the great master and teacher of a generation of sinologists and especially Taoism-specialists. The Kaltenmark-Festschrift contains not only a bibliography of the *jubilatis*, but also a list of Ph.D. theses written under his direction. This annual of rare excellence seems to be bent on having every issue outdo its predecessor. In addition to *articles de fond*, there are valuable research reports and (to pass straight from com-

parative to superlative) invaluable book-reviews and annotated bibliographies, especially bibliographies of Japanese research that would otherwise remain unknown to western scholarship.

This latter point also has some bearing on the anxiety felt by the increasing number of increasingly enthusiastic readers of this excellent publication. Petty personal jealousies and despicable vendettas are as rampant in academia as elsewhere. The reputation of the aforementioned French research centre among the international scholarly community, *inter alia* also for its gracious and high-level intellectual hospitality, is no doubt a thorn in the flesh of some petty bureaucrats (even if well-known scholars) who feel that they ought to play “the boss”. The meteoric success of the *Cahiers* may well invite attempts to kill it, and there are many ways to do so. One scenario would be to recall, under some shabby pretext, one or more members of the hardworking Kyoto crew (possibly the Chief Editor herself) to Paris although (or rather precisely because) the editorial work, especially the bibliographical summaries of Japanese publications, can *only* be done in Kyoto. Another scenario would be to announce that the undertaking was too expensive (although, as a matter of fact, the *Cahiers* manage to pay their way whilst the Paris-edited BEFEO is deep in the red). Yet another scenario would be: because the BEFEO is in the red and moreover hopelessly outdated in editorial policy and distribution, and hence in urgent need of thorough revamping and overhaul, some petty academic mini-czar may, by an administrative *ukase*, order the “merging” of the two publications (a euphemism for killing the *Cahiers* by having them swallowed by the EFEO Bulletin). It should be added here, in all fairness, that some of the Paris EFEO members are currently making serious efforts to rehabilitate the publication. Their efforts are accompanied by our sincere good wishes. Readers of the *Cahiers* can only hope that the fears expressed here are completely unfounded and merely due to the diseased imagination of a paranoid reviewer. If this should be the case, nobody will be happier than the writer of these lines and the international scholarly community.

“Chinese religion is neither simply unified nor simply diverse”. This opening sentence of ch. 6 of R. P. Weller’s study of religion in Taiwan³¹ sums up the argument of the book, which is strictly anthropological in method and research design. It restricts itself to a specific area in northern Taiwan, bases itself squarely on fieldwork (so much so that most Chinese terms are given in Hokkien—the reader must make an effort to remind himself time and again that Kuan Im is Guan Yin), and constructs its argument around the analysis of a specific festival: the annual ghost [soul?] feeding ritual. The intellectual presence, between and behind the

lines, of Maurice Freedman, A. P. Wolf and C. K. Yang is evident. As in many a first-class study, the apparent weakness of too narrow a focus turns out to be its strength, for the implications and ramifications of what is a test-case go far beyond the explicit theme. The real themes are the unity and diversity of ritual as well as of interpretation (by whom? the ordinary lay practitioners? the “elite”?, the ritual specialists?) and the “interface” of Buddhist, Taoist and folk practice. The author distinguishes between ancestors, spirits and gods, but realises that there are no hard and fast distinctions. (This is beautifully illustrated by the fact that A. P. Wolf’s paper “Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors” in the volume (1974) edited by Wolf is followed by a chapter by C. S. Harrell “When a Ghost becomes a God”). Military officers as gods would have surprised the anthropologist less had he also been an historian of religion acquainted with the thirty-six celestial generals or the deified Kuen Ti. The constant use, practically as key terms, of pragmatic *versus* ideologising interpretation occasionally grates on the ear, but there is no denying that it helps to clarify the argument. Anthropology and History of Religions: one would like this book to be read as part of a trilogy and in conjunction with Stephen Teiser (see NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 123) and Valerie Hansen (see NUMEN xxvii, 1990: 267).

Few historians of religion would waste time on the meaningless pseudo-question whether Confucianism is a religion or not, whether it is a *chose sociale* or (of great importance for people with a pietistic mentality) also a deeply personal matter, since everything depends on what you mean by religion (and this more general and basic question has nothing whatever to do with alleged western monotheistic presuppositions—this being one of the silliest western-scholarship misconceptions, probably on the rebound from, and overreacting to, the sins of western colonialism), whether it is a good thing or a pejorative term, and for what precise reason the question is asked. Nobody ever doubted that Confucianism has a long and variegated history in which Taoist and Buddhist elements are interwoven; that it has its cosmological and other myths; that it has its temples, rituals, liturgies and even sacrifices; that, like every religion, it has its “legitimizing” functions with regard to social, political as well as moral and spiritual institutions and values; that it possesses and transmits images of the ideal or perfect man as well as methods for realising these; that self-cultivation can also include quiet sitting in meditation (*ching-tso*, rendered *zazen* in Japanese!), and that depending on your ideological stance you can talk about it as an historical past (Weber, Levenson) or as a meaningful contemporary option (Tu Wei-ming, Okada and others). The early Jesuits dismissed Buddhism and Taoism as pagan and

idolatrous religions but valued Confucianism as a non-specific religion (i.e., a *religio naturalis*) and hence capable of being perfected by Christianity. For Leibniz Confucianism was not a religion at all but a cultural system, and hence capable of adopting Christianity as a religion whilst preserving its cultural specificity. The above remarks notwithstanding. Prof. Taylor's book³² is a valuable contribution and not a rehash of old stuff. The author is not only dotting i's and crossing t's, but also offering us new insights and—even more important—placing insights both old and new in a framework that gives them wider meaning. It is inevitable that the most dialogue-happy of all religions should get a separate comparative chapter (for once, mercifully, not the inevitable Kyoto School “Buddhism-and-Christianity” under the sign of Heidegger, and not Buddhism-and-modernity; cf. NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 127 on Nakamura) but “Confucianism and....”. This collection of previously published essays nevertheless possesses a backbone that gives it unity. And the author is to be congratulated on not talking about Confucian religion but conveying to the reader a sense of the “religious dimensions” of Confucianism.

“Esoteric Buddhism” (*mikkyo*) is gradually getting better known in the English-speaking world. A Shingon book (by an “insider”) was reviewed in NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 124-5. One of the most scholarly and expert “outsiders” (see the Tendai double issue of the JJRSt 1988 edited by him, and his survey of Japanese Tendai research-publications in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* vol. 2) has produced a fine account (descriptive, historical, and textual) of T'ien T'ai (j. Tendai) philosophy.³³ If complaints are to be made, they are of the kind voiced in NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 125-6 in connection with a Jodo study, regarding the absence of French and German publications from the writings of American scholars. Up to a point this deficiency is compensated by their enviable familiarity with the enormous amount of generally unknown Japanese scholarship, but up to a point only, considering the high quality of the great “classics” of previous generations. This is a serious, not only formal but also substantive, deficiency. After having placed on record our regrets in this regard, we can now move to the praise of Dr. Swanson's study. The title and subtitle are meant to prevent the wrong kind of expectations. This is not a book about Tendai, but about its philosophy or rather the foundations of the latter. The theme—to narrow the focus with even greater precision—is the “two truths theory” and its elaboration into a three truths theory. From a consideration of “truth” in Tendai we are taken to a discussion of the syncretistic character of much Mahayana in general and of Chinese T'ien T'ai in particular, from Nagarjuna to the threefold truth interpretation of

the latter by Chih-I, and to an account of the place of this 6th cent. T'ien T'ai patriarch in the history of Chinese Madhyamika. "Chinese Madhyamika" can also mean the Sanlun School, and the controversy is dealt with in a special chapter. More than a third of the book is taken up by a translation of part of the *Fa-hua hsuan-i*, Chih I's magnum opus on the Lotus Sutra. Chih-I's text devotes much space to expounding the word *miao* (in the Chinese title of the sutra), and, rather surprisingly for a Lotus commentary, quotes the Mahaparanirvana Sutra with such frequency as to make it seem the central text. With its over 100 pp. of notes and charts, the book is a first-rate contribution.

Western theologians, as distinct from historians of religion, are apt to get a very one- (or lop-) sided picture of Japanese Buddhism, especially as they are hopelessly and incurably enamoured of the so-called Kyoto School and of what the latter peddles as Zen. NUMEN xxxiii (1986): 254-5 reported on the late Prof. Yamaguchi's Mahayana-book (unfortunately the author's name was spelled incorrectly: it should be YAMAGUCHI Susumu) and its thesis to the effect that there was a straight line from the Buddha via Nagarjuna, Madhyamika, Vijnanavada to Pure Land and even Tantrism: they are all branches and developments of the one Mahayana "theory of enlightenment". The same issue of NUMEN, pp. 265-6, reported on Prof. SHIMIZU Masumi's study of the Mahayana concept of "self", and his views on Buddhist self-realisation, *soku-hi*, identity of essence and existence as well as of A and non-A and so on, the whole peppered with lots of German-derived Kyoto School jargon. In the circumstances it seems desirable to acquaint readers with the Japanese (unfortunately untranslated) collection of essays by Prof. Hakamaya,³⁴ titled "Critique of the Thought of Inherent Enlightenment": The theory of inherent enlightenment, Zen, the Vimalakirti Sutra (non-dualism!), even Yogacara, not to speak of the Kyoto School (here this reviewer heartily agrees), are not Buddhism. Prof. Hakamaya's daunting as well as militant scholarship, though it has allies in other Japanese specialists, will undoubtedly come under fire from scholars of no lesser stature. The intention of this brief note is not to take sides in this controversy (though this reviewer, as an historian of religion, feels that the author addresses his theme from a philosopher's and not from a historian's point of view), but to make western readers aware of the fact that Japanese scholarship consists of more than the diet on which they are normally fed in western-language translations.

Before taking leave of China, we are in private duty bound to make brief mention of a name which inevitably crops up in every sociological discourse on Chinese religion(s?): Max Weber. No matter how much of

Weber is outdated after decades of critical Weber-discussion and decades of spectacular progress in sinology, his questions (and some of his answers) are still relevant and amazingly stimulating. Abt. I, vol. 19 of the currently published *Max-Weber-Gesamtausgabe* contains his classic Confucianism-Taoism essay.³⁵ The *Gesamtausgabe* can call itself lucky that an eminent sinologist of the calibre of Schmidt-Glintzer has undertaken the thankless (??) task of producing an exemplary edition, in accordance with the most rigorous rules of editorial art. Glossaries and indices plus a list of the literature quoted by Weber make this the indispensable text for every student of Weber and/or the sociological dimensions of Chinese religion. We no longer have to fear fits of despair when looking for all passages where e.g., Weber talks of the dependence of the individual on his guild. Thanks to Schmidt-Glintzer we merely have to go to the index s.v. *hui-kuan*.

I do not know who has launched the term “re-visiting” on its career. It seems that scholars have ceased to visit and are, instead, revisiting all the time Durkheim, Freud, Weber etc. Weber has been repeatedly revisited, especially at the Bad Homburg conferences of the Reimers Foundation. The excellent volumes to which these conferences have given birth will be reviewed in another Book Survey. Meanwhile only the Weber-and-China volume shall be mentioned here.³⁶ The emphasis of most participants (among them the late W. Eberhard, Th. Metzger, TU Weiming, N. Sivin, S. Eisenstadt) was on Confucianism rather than Taoism, and perhaps the order of the key-nouns in the subtitle should be reversed and read “critique and interpretation”. From the point of view of Weber studies, Schluchter’s introductory chapter alone would justify the volume. The other eleven contributions well illustrate the impact of Weber on both sociologists (who are challenged to serious macrosocial-*cum*-historical analysis) and sinologists (who are challenged to ask questions that usually do not appear in the sinology curriculum).

An exceptionally insightful contribution to an understanding of Japanese culture, combining anthropological method with a (most unanthropological) grasp of the historical dimension, plus a penetrating interpretation of ritual, is Prof. Ohnuki-Tierny’s stunningly brilliant *Monkey*.³⁷ The Christian middle ages called the devil the “ape of God”, and art was *simia naturae*. But this is taking too static a view of the symbolic role of this caricature-like human resemblance (→ potential mediator). Monkeys, monkey-trainers and actors as well as monkey- and other animal performances, marginality and even outcasts (e.g. the *burakumin*) combine to illustrate the shifting quality and “polysemy” of social and symbolic systems viz. both structure and anti-structure, “version” and “inver-

sion''. But binary opposites are not simply resolved by a mere mediating *tertium*. The system as a whole is in constant flux and transformative change, and in this flux also the relationship nature/culture reveals itself as a symbolic process of two-way traffic. The both empirical/historical and theoretical description/analysis moves from "monkey as metaphor" in Japan to "special status people" to monkey performances past and present, and from there to an important sociological chapter on the "reflexive structure of the Japanese". The theoretical importance of this book goes methodologically far beyond the special Japanese case. Its theoretical sophistication does not make it an easy book for beginners. Readers who mistakenly think that they have struggled to the top of theoretical sophistication should turn to the same author's article "Monkey as Metaphor?" in *Man* vol. 25 (1990).

Matsuri (festival, ritual celebration) has often been said to be the heart and core of Shintoism. They range from highly formal and solemn rituals to popular festivals (including processions, dancing, sumo-wrestling) not devoid of less solemn "saturnalian" excesses. The relation of Shinto to state ideology is perhaps adumbrated in the semantic spectrum of the term *matsuri-goto*. That popular celebrations often involve the relaxation of normal codes of behaviour and even taboos (in most cases their description as "antinomian" or "transgressive" would seem to be exaggerated and misleading, although as far back as 1969 the late Hori Ichiro wrote on "Rites of Purification and Orgy" in Japanese folk-religion) is a near-universal phenomenon, and there is no reason to single out Shinto as a special case. In the very welcome volume *Matsuri*,³⁸ Prof. Sonoda may well overstate the case for "sacred transgression" in his extremely interesting description and analysis of several *matsuri*. Prof. Mogi's essay is not only a fine piece of ethnography, but a valuable analysis illustrating how the spatial orientation of a *matsuri* can reveal aspects of the social structure of the local community. Most papers (except the more general one by the late Prof. Yanagawa Keiichi; see obituary in NUMEN xxxvii, 1990: 287) start out from a description/analysis of specific local *matsuri*. Special thanks are due to the translator, Mr Norman Havens, for pulling together all the loose ends in his postscript (pp. 147-55) which also provides helpful notes and a bibliography. The Institute of Japanese Classics and Culture of Kokugakuin University is to be congratulated on initiating this series for the benefit of non-Japanese scholars.

Helen Hardacre's important and excellent study of "Shinto and the State"³⁹ does not come as a surprise to those who have read her recent articles, which were what the French would call *travaux d'amorce*. Now we have the complete opus which can be considered the authoritative summ-

ing up of the *status quaestionis*. If the cut-off date had been 1991 rather than 1988, the author could also have included the controversies surrounding the enthronement of the Heisei Emperor, though it would have made little difference to her account and argument. This is no ethnographic, let alone “spiritual”, description of Shinto beliefs, folk customs, *matsuri* etc. The book delivers precisely what the title indicates. The good, though only “selected” bibliography (Michael Pye’s useful article in *Religion* xi, 1981, is unfortunately absent) illustrates how badly we were in need, in spite of the wealth of extant publications, including Holtom, Friedell, Creemers, Woodard (and not Woodward!), of a systematic historical synthesis from Meiji to the present day. The extent of historical developments as well as of progress of scholarship is well illustrated by a comparison of Hardacre with Bulletin no. 7 (Sept. 1959) of the *Kokusai Shukyo Kenkyu Sho* on “Religion and State in Japan” (not mentioned in the bibliography). The section “Is Shinto a Religion?” does not repeat the usual irrelevancies (like “Is Confucianism a Religion?”) but deals with the Meiji-period *internal* discussions (religion? state cult? establishment of a *jinja kyoka* under the Home Office as distinct from the administration of other religions by the Ministry of Education etc.). The period under discussion saw two revolutions as regards Shinto: Meiji and McArthur (religious freedom, constitutional separation of Shinto and state). Prof. Hardacre’s study, however, goes beyond an analysis of political and administrative developments. The sociologist Hardacre highlights aspects and dynamics that have often gone unnoticed. In fact, some of her most interesting analyses could have been presented under the Edward Shilsian title “Centre and Periphery”. The thrust of the book is beautifully illustrated by the picture on the dust-jacket (which, I hope, every reader will jealously guard): Prime Minister Nakasone, led by a Shinto priest, descending the steps of Yasukuni Jinja. The fact that this reviewer also possesses photos of Mr. Nakasone (in Japanese dress and not in striped trousers) during his regular *zazen* sitting in a meditation hall, enhances for him the significance of the dustjacket picture.

This book-survey has to break its rules for a second time and to mention another important Japanese publication. The so-called “new religions” of Japan make their regular appearance in almost every NUMEN survey as western-language monographs continue to pour from the presses. The 1981 Japanese “Handbook of Studies on the New Religions” (*Shin shukyo kenkyu chosa handobukku*) has not been reviewed in these pages. Its more systematic, comprehensive and massive successor, however, cannot be ignored. With the new “Dictionary of the New Religions”⁴⁰ the younger generation of Japanese scholars is presenting us not only with a new and

up-to-date goldmine of data and information. The Dictionary viz. “data” section not only lists over 3000 entries covering, chronologically, the period 1756-1989, but also gives a wealth of references to scholarly publications of the “new” religious organisations themselves. The two parts of the book are equally valuable and authoritative. The “data” section may be the *prima facie* more immediately useful, but the “theme” section (divided into 8 main themes) will be found by many users to be the more stimulating. What are the essential and specific characteristics of the new (i.e. old new, new, new new and neo-new) religions, the circumstances of their emergence, their founders, forms of organisation, teachings and religious practices, social background and environment, proselytising activities (nationally and internationally) etc.? No further research on the new religions will be able to dispense with this impressive standard-work, the product of the combined effort of about 50 scholars of the younger generation summing up the present *status quaestionis*.

Prof. Frits Vos needs no introduction to Japanologists (and to Koreanologists, for that matter). His disciples felt the need to discharge a duty of honour and gratitude by offering him a *Festschrift*⁴¹—he had retired from his Leiden chair in 1983. In keeping with the wide range of Vos’s work, the volume contains contributions to Chinese, Korean, and Japanese studies, especially in the areas of history and literature (including theatre). Of interest to students of religion are W.R. van Gulik’s analysis of a rite of *envoûtement*, and W.J. Boot’s solid piece of research on Jigen Daishi (Tenkai). The writer does not mention (perhaps because considered as irrelevant to his study) the role played by Tenkai also after Ieyasu’s death in the deification procedure of the late shogun and in the choice of the name To-sho-dai-gongen (with its Buddhist connotations). C. Ouwehand’s article on religion in Japan, the only one to be written in Dutch, remains on the surface of things.

The grand old man of the History of Religions fortunately continues to bring to press his collected papers as well as unpublished public lectures. *On Understanding Japanese Religion* was mentioned in NUMEN xxxvii (1990): 270. Earlier, in 1987, a more wide-ranging collection of essays *The History of Religions: Understanding Human Experience* was published as vol. 47 of AAR Studies in Religion. The 1977 Rockwell Lectures⁴² are more personal and also more expressive of the scholar’s profounder concerns. As the title indicates, the author addresses these concerns from an Asian perspective: the ancient Asian “World of Meaning”, Asians’ “mixed memory of Western domination”, and finally “Spiritual Liberation and Human Freedom in Asia”. The reader feels as if Prof. Kitagawa, a Japanese who spent all his adult academic life in the U.S., was taking him into his confidence.

History of Religions: Mysticism

Prof. Carl-A. Keller, son of an India-missionary and himself for some time an India-missionary, has developed a particularly intimate relationship with Indian, both classical (e.g. Mahabharata) and contemporary (more particularly Tamil), religion, especially as he saw his Indian fellow-man not as an object of proselytising endeavour but as a demand on his intellectual as well as religious and theological perception. On the occasion of his retirement from his Lausanne chair, his friends presented him, fortunately, not with a *Festschrift* but with his scattered essays, now collected in one handy volume.⁴³ 2 chapters deal with O.T. subjects (Keller has published extensively on the O.T.), but then the volume switches to Hindu Myths, Shivaite experience, and a fascinating comparison (without suggesting historical connections or influences) between the Gita and the Ashokan Edicts on the subject of “violence and dharma”. The second half of the volume contains essays on mysticism in general, Tamil Shivaite hymns and *bhakti*, Muslim mysticism, and comparisons of Christian and non-Christian religion and mysticism. Keller does not automatically follow all current theological fads and, surprisingly, has some nice things to say about gnosticism.

Two subsequent volumes⁴⁴ deal more “systematically” with certain central themes: general methodological problems, mystical “teachings” and practices, the role of the body, master-disciple, practice and philosophical reflection, the role of imagination, mysticism and ethics, faith-identity-madness, love—including madness, sexuality and eroticism in Sufism and Tantrism—and much more. The reader of the chapters on imagination, madness and love cannot help remembering Shakespeare: “the madman and the lover.... are of imagination all compact”, or, in connection with “identity”, the fact that in French a psychopath is an *aliéné*. These volumes are eminently readable. It is regrettable that for the majority of students of religion today the rule applies *gallica sunt, non leguntur*.

Margery Kempe (d. after 1433)—her pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Santiago are listed in the Ganz-Blättler volume mentioned above—is a somewhat disconcerting “mystic”, though very characteristic of her age. In fact, the thrust of John C. Hirsh’s argument is indicated here by placing the word mystic between inverted commas. Mysticism has never been satisfactorily defined, and every author has his own ways of distinguishing between “genuine” mysticism (whether supernatural, preternatural or natural) and pseudo-mysticism, paramysticism etc. Jewish studies, for instance are blighted by the custom of restricting mysticism to the theosophic, semi-gnostic speculations of the Kabbalah, whilst legislating

that the sufi-type mysticism of Bahya's *Duties of the Heart* is not mysticism but pietism. Hirsh's slender but valuable volume⁴⁵ firmly places Margery in the context of late medieval devotion. His discussion of traditional devotional practices, of orthodoxy and suspicions of heresy (Margery was accused of "Lollardy"), and of the mystics' efforts at accommodation with ecclesiastical authority seem to justify his thesis that Margery was not a "mystic" *stricto sensu*. Her devotional life (including the gift of tears, sense of communion with Christ, and compassion for the sins of the world) is shown to be influenced by contemporary devout practices as well as by the literature and the *exemplum* of acknowledged mystics (Dame Julian, St. Bridget), and discussed in terms of the "paramystical" piety of the period. A helpful and illuminating study, though the relevance of the quotation from Wilfred C. Smith, placed at its beginning as a motto, is not quite clear. "Symbols, institutions, doctrines, practices" (ever so many externals!) are not in themselves religion. "The student is making effective progress when he recognizes that he has to do not with religious symbols.... but with religious persons....". Aye, and the same holds not only for religion but also for sex and ever so many other things.

History of Religions: Iconography

Iconography makes its regular appearance in these pages. On the reviewer's desk there are two volumes that deserve attention. *Götterbild in Kunst und Schrift*⁴⁶ presents a series of semi-popular public lectures given at Bonn University. Nine lectures by nine experts, reflecting the diversity of religions and their iconography, are impossible to summarise. This survey (NUMEN xxxiv, 1987: 265-6) has praised the Groningen series "Iconography of Religions" for including the written word and calligraphy. Prof. Klimkeit's decision to organise the series around "divine image in art and scripture" is equally praiseworthy, and so is his opening chapter on divine scripture and divine image. Other chapters deal with pre-conquest American religions, ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Word of God in Judaism, and Holy Scripture in Indian and Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism. The chapter on the "so-called prohibition of images in Islam" attempts to view its subject in the context of a phenomenology of Islam which would lead to a better comprehension of the two sides of the Islamic medal: the emphasis on the "word", and the concomittant hostility to plastic images. K. Fischer's chapter on cult-images in Indian caves, stupas and temples will be found instructive also by readers familiar with Indian iconography. Extremely stimulating and valuable is Monika Thiel-Horstmann's chapter on "shape and beyond

shape'', or, more precisely, the Hindu (and not the outsiders') discussions concerning the nature of the holy image. Addiction to a fashionable German jargon (esp. *Vollzug* as in *Religionsvollzug*, *Glaubensvollzug* etc.) make the *Lektürevollzug* of this interesting chapter an at times irritating experience. Unfortunately there is no chapter on the history of Chinese writing which began not as a human means of communication but as a divine script. It is a pity that the illustrations are not of the same high quality as the text.

Less focused on religion, because primarily concerned with "oriental art" and its approaches to images and portraiture, is the volume edited by M. Kraatz, J.-M. zur Capellen, and the eminent historian of East Asian art D. Seckel.⁴⁷ The image in ancient Iran, the portraiture of rulers in Islamic (including Turkish) art, the "iconography of identity" in ancient Egypt and (according to J. Assman) the Egyptian perception of individuality as determined by the encounter with death, plus highly detailed studies such as e.g., the half, three-quarters and full profile representation, are among the subjects competently treated. Historians of religion come into their own in the opening chapter by one of the editors (M. Kraatz, director of the *Religionskundliche Sammlung* at Marburg University) on the *Porträtierbarkeit* of god and gods, Doris Croissant's fascinating essay on effigies of ancestors and effigies that contain relics (are they portraits or reliquiaries?), and—since Japanese emperors are *kami*—the fine essay on the portraits of the Meiji Emperor by I. Klein-Bednay. The volume is lavishly illustrated with plates.

History of Religions: Myths

Myths and mythology, and by extension symbols (see NUMEN xxxi, 1984: 137-9), have been much at the centre of attention for quite some time: historical (from mythology as well as its criticism in ancient Greece to the contemptuous rejection by enlightenment rationalism, to the rediscovery and rehabilitation by the romantics (Schelling and Hegel, Hölderlin and Novalis, Creuzer), to the spectrum of modern interpretations), philosophical, anthropological, and psychological. The catchphrase "*mythos* to *logos*" evidently is not the whole truth, and no doubt the current preoccupation with the subject is also nourished by a sense of the impoverishment of our deeply dissatisfied culture with what is said to be a shallow scientism. Needless to say that others point to the dangers of mythical revivals (Cassirer! Cf. also NUMEN xxxvi, 1989: 113 ff. on the author of *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* and his religion) and of [pseudo-]

“mystical obscurantism” (Ricoeur), also called—the phrase is Thomas Mann’s, referring to Bachofen—“revolutionary obscurantism”. Others again are primarily concerned with the search for an adequate hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur) that would lead to a “recovery of meaning” (whatever that may mean)—whether the correct interpretation of certain historical data or a meaning which illuminates the enquirer’s existence. The discussion gathered momentum by the recognition that myth cannot be looked at in isolation but must be viewed in conjunction with ritual. Bultmann’s de-mythologisation (in reality a re-mythologisation) programme added a theological dimension to the debate. In the last resort “other peoples’ myths” (to use the title of one of Wendy Doniger’s books) are also our own, even as our own myths can occasionally make us see ourselves as “other”. Two recent publications contribute to a better understanding of the questions asked and of the kind of answers proffered in contemporary scholarship.

W. G. Doty’s *Mythography*⁴⁸ provides a most readable and helpful discussion, especially as the author pleads for a multi-levelled and complex approach that would avoid the mono-mythicism underlying some systems. The book deals not only with Frazer, Jane Harrison, J. Campbell, Frye, V. Turner, Eliade, Freud, Jung, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes (and each name stands for a whole “universe of discourse”), but with many other names with which the reader (much to his loss) may not have been familiar previously. The discussion of biogenetic and cultural structures (“the cosmological human body”), of the “myth dimensions of our decentred and deconstructed universe”, and of myth criticism in literary analysis is particularly instructive. The “Selected Introductory Bibliography” (pp. 266-276) is an added boon and enhances the value of the book also for teachers and students.

Ivan Strenski’s study actually has greater relevance and profundity than appears at first sight. Beyond his illuminating analysis of four 20th century theories of myth⁴⁹ it tells us something about the cultural and personal background against which the great theorists of myth operate: Cassirer (“political myths and primitive reality” in Weimar Germany), Malinowski (a pragmatic and romantic mythologist struggling against the British colonial administration), Eliade and myth (in the radicalised Romania of the 1930’s), Lévi-Strauss and myth (in the Durkheimian perspective but in the last days of the Third Republic). The author is also aware of the significant fact that currently anthropologists occupy the privileged position in the study of myth formerly occupied by philosophers. By firmly anchoring and locating the theorists of myth in their historical contexts, we gain important insights into the process of the

construction of both the concept “myth” and the theories about it. Juxtaposition inevitably leads to comparison and, more important, to the recognition that the (ultimately prescriptive) theories are so different from one another that there is no minimal common ground for discussion between them. The author’s conclusion is that “instead of there being a real thing, myth, there is a thriving *industry*, manufacturing and marketing what is *called* myth”. Many mythographs will undoubtedly demur, but none can deny that the thesis is eminently worth pondering. One very much hopes that Prof. Strenski will continue working in this area, not necessarily by repeating exactly the same performance with additional names (e.g. Max Müller, Frazer, Jung), but by bringing to bear the paradigm and the insights of his analysis on more problems in the study of what is called myth.

Ancestors (of the modern study of religions)

Also non-philosophical historians of religion will agree that the history of philosophy and the history of ideas are relevant to their work for at least three reasons. In the first place a not insignificant part of religious history takes place on a strictly philosophical level—in the “east” as in the “west”. Secondly, even when not strictly philosophical, religious discourse as well as discourse about religion use philosophical terminology or terminology deriving from philosophical traditions (“being”, “non-being”, transcendence, pantheism etc.). Thirdly, the modern study of religion as practised in academia—mainly a western invention—has inherited its conceptual apparatus as well as its ideological ballast (philosophical and rationalist criticism of religion, deism, *Aufklärung*, romanticism, evolutionism) from certain well-defined stages and trends in western history. Several recent publications illustrate this historical connection.

Spinoza has often been described as the enemy *par excellence* of religion (because of the *Tractatus* and its criticism of religious institutions and sacred scriptures) and, because of his “pantheism”, as the very incarnation of atheism. His pantheism was related by some to alleged influence of the Kabbalah, particularly the writings of Herrera (Amsterdam, 17th cent.). Some would attribute to him the authorship of the notorious tract “On the Three Impostors”. Others went one better and asserted that Spinoza was much worse and more dangerous than the aforementioned tract. Some orthodox polemicists turned the tables and identified the three impostors as the deist Herbert of Cherbury, Thomas Hobbes and Spinoza. In view of the revived Spinozist controversy in the 18th century

(Reimarus, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Jacobi) and in connection with Lessing's adaptation of Boccaccio's parable of the three rings, the *Three Impostors* gained new relevance. Vol. 12 of the Wolfenbüttel Studies⁵⁰ deals with the earliest stages of the impact of Spinoza's thought on contemporary religion. The nine contributors to the Wolfenbüttel Symposium 1980 discuss a wide range of subjects: Spinoza and 1) the Kabbalah, 2) Protestant orthodoxy, 3) pietistic trends, 4) mystical and rationalist theology, 5) neo-platonising trends, 6) Richard Simon (one of the founding fathers of the textual criticism of the OT), 7) The Three Impostors, and much more. A learned and fascinating as well as stimulating volume.

The series *Bible de tous les temps* sounds at first like a religious publishing venture, and the misleading title (possibly for publicity purposes) may well turn away the scholarly public for whom it is intended. All volumes follow the same basic pattern. Vol. 7, "The Bible in the Age of Enlightenment", boasting over 850 pp. and 44 chapters,⁵¹ is not exactly a pocket-book, but it certainly is a monument of erudition and withal a sheer pleasure to read. The period concerned defies simple definitions: it is the period of serious but increasingly shallow rationalist criticism of religion, of mystical revivals and pietistic enthusiasm viz. *Schwärmerei*, of Voltaire, Diderot, the Wesleys and Zinzendorf. Not every rationalist criticism of religion is irreligious. Sometimes it leads not to contemptuous dismissal but to rationally "acceptable" re-interpretation. Spinoza was the enemy of religion because—*horribile dictu*—he insisted that all biblical statements and stories were meant to be taken literally and not allegorically (as Maimonides and other rationalist apologists taught). Thereby he did not break a lance for fundamentalism but, on the contrary, intended to make the Bible "unacceptable" to rational minds. Leibniz, *per contram*, had written an *Histoire de Balaam*: the objectionable story of the heathen prophet and his ass really recounts a dream! There are country-by-country chapters on the printings, translations and diffusion of the Bible; the Bible and the beginnings of textual criticism; the Bible and art, including theatre and music (Händel!); interpretation (commentaries, sermons, Jewish Kabbalah, Protestant mystics, Catholic *Aufklärung*, freethinkers, Kant) and the readers (moralists, heretics, reactionaries, freemasons, encyclopaedists, philosophers such as Mendelssohn, Wolf and Kant). The editors are to be congratulated on a splendid job.

If the period named after the Enlightenment is difficult to define, the age of romanticism is even more so. Therefore, instead of analysing the age, Prof. Reardon,⁵² after discussing the terms "romanticism" and "idealism", analyses representative thinkers: Schleiermacher and

religious consciousness, Hegel and Christianity, Schelling and the idea of God, Comte and the religion of humanity, Renan and the religion of science, Lamennais and papal condemnation. This is an extremely helpful collection of essays, if only because—as has been noted above—both enlightenment and romanticism are among the ancestors of our discipline.

Closely related to the themes mentioned in the preceding paragraphs is the concept of Natural Religion. In his fine study of *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion*⁵³ Dr. Byrne draws the lines from deism and its criticism of religion (in fact, the concept of Natural Religion is a “legacy of deism”) to the “contemporary study of religions” (chs. 7 and 8). The title of ch. 6 “Religion, Romanticism and Idealism” almost duplicates that of Reardon’s ch. 1. Not everything, in fact rather little of what is said in the book, is new, at least to historians of religion, but it is said lucidly and well. And a philosopher rather than member of the HR guild, the author quotes Kurt Rudolph on certain essential points, apparently without realising that Rudolph merely enunciates the traditional consensus of most (or so one hopes) historians of religion for whom all religion is “natural”, though one obviously has to distinguish the religions that claim diverse kinds of supernatural viz. revealed origin from those which do not. The commonplace that there is no religion but only religions (all equally “natural”), is anything but a noteworthy *specificum*. If historians of religion tend to repeat it, it is because philosophers still keep talking about religion in the singular. Has anybody ever spoken, or heard, “language”? People usually speak French, or Swedish, or Swahili, or Urdu, or Chinese, or Esperanto. On the other hand one would like to see a thorough exploration of the similarities with (as well as differences from) Natural Theology as traditionally championed by the Roman Catholic Church. In the words of Vatican I: *Si quis dixerit Deum unum et verum... per ea quae facta sunt naturali rationis humanae lumine certo cognosci non posse: anathema sit.* (That is also why so many theologians, from Calvin to Karl Barth are under anathema). Söderblom realised that the concept of natural religion was useless for both theologians and historians of religion, and wished to base the history of religions on the notion of “general revelation”. But as one of his admirers, G. van der Leeuw, pointed out, the concept of *revelatio generalis* is as useless and meaningless as “natural religion”. There only are *revelationes speciales* (viz. experiences or traditional accounts of such). Nevertheless Byrne’s study is recommended reading.

Unfortunately neither Söderblom (a kind of twin-brother of Rudolf Otto) nor van der Leeuw (who called him the “father of the phenomenology of religion”) are mentioned by Byrne. Söderblom is not

an ancestor but one of the immediate grandfathers of the contemporary study of religions. Prof. Eric Sharpe (*Comparative Religion*, 1975) had already written perceptively and competently on Söderblom. If anyone was to write the long overdue monograph⁵⁴ on this scholar and churchman, professor (before Uppsala he taught in Leipzig and was thus a predecessor of Joachim Wach and Kurt Rudolph) and archbishop, the obvious candidate was Eric Sharpe, one of the few non-Scandinavians thoroughly at home in Sweden, the Swedish language, Swedish academia and Swedish Church-life. The biography and critical appreciation/evaluation are soberly admiring without ever lapsing into hero-worship. Special thanks are due to the author for not ending with the last chapter but adding the beautiful postscript pp. 201-213.

From "primitive" to less (?) primitive

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl needs no reviews. His insights, if properly understood and not misrepresented, are still highly relevant in spite of his revocation (into which he was "terrorised", as C. G. Jung once put it, by his critics) in the *Carnets*. As a matter of fact, Lévy-Bruhl's critics often said exactly the same, only in a more pretentious and "modern" jargon, as Evans-Pritchard pointed out as far back as 1934. *Les fonctions mentales* (1910) was published in English in 1926 and again in 1966, and reprinted by Princeton U.P. (1985) also in paperback.⁵⁵ This last edition is recommended to every student, not least because of the fine and illuminating Introduction (pp. v-lviii) "Lévy-Bruhl and the Concept of Cognitive Relativity" by C. Scott Littleton, whose 1966 study of Dumézil is probably known to every student of religion.

Cannibalism is a strangely fascinating subject. It is certainly a cultural system, deeply embedded in a society's view of life, death and their underlying forces, of the cosmos, the gods, self and the "other". Often it is part of a distinct ritual system rather than a method of dealing with protein deficiency (cf. the short report in NUMEN xxvii, 1990: 190-1 on the 1979 Dumbarton Oaks Conference on Aztec cannibalism). All this is old hat and one wonders why anyone should want to say it again. *Divine Hunger*⁵⁶, at least in its title, seems to overemphasise the ritual side, for it is not always the divine hunger of gods that makes us eat one another. (Human sacrifice is a different matter altogether, though sacrifice and meat-consumption are not unrelated. But this is true of every sacrifice). Sometimes things seem to go wrong when anthropologists discover America (or Jung, or Ricoeur, or even—*mirabile dictu*—Hegel) and get hung up on faddish existentialist, psychological or hermeneutical jargon.

Cannibalism is what we always knew it to be, but no doubt talking about the “ontological structures of being-in-the-world” sounds far more impressive. Probably a brief introductory survey of the history of *anthropophages* ethnography and research (beginning with Hans Staden, *Warhaftige Historia und beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der Wilden/Nackten/Grimmigen Menschfresser Leuthen*, Marburg, 1557) would have given not only the reader but also the author a better sense of perspective. (De Sahagun and the Jesuit Relations, though, are briefly mentioned). E. Volhard’s massive *Kannibalismus* (1939; pp. 540 and 42 plates) was evidently unknown to the author as also the work of A. Jensen who, not quite incidentally, wrote the Foreword to Volhard. One may reject much of Jensen’s ethnology as tainted with a certain brand of German romanticism, but even the Frobenius-School type of neo-romantic ethnology is better than being presented with the “maternal uroboros” (C. G. Jung updated by Erich Neumann) as the key to our understanding of cannibalism. Of course Jensen related cannibalism to the mythical *Weltbild* of those who practice it, but in the poverty of his language the poor man did not know that he should have spoken of the “mythical chartering and transformation of cannibal practice”.

Endo-cannibalism is a particularly fascinating problem. The Waika Indians (Sierra Parima, border area of Venezuela/Brasil) live in such fear of the evil spirit Guajo that it is imperative to save the dying from his grasp: they are therefore killed, their blood is drunk, the bones pounded and reduced to power of which a porridge is made and eaten. Thus the dead are saved from the grip of Guajo, remain integrated in their community, and are assured of a blessed hereafter. This reviewer hopes that some day someone will tell this story, for our benefit and instruction, in Hegelian-Jungian-Ricoeurian language, not forgetting the uroboric Mother Goddess, dialectics, and sublation.

Anthropologists and students of religion (especially those interested in “messianic” movements) have one thing in common: both were brought up on the Ghost Dance and on such comparative exercises as Jack Wilson and Handsome Lake. Between the original Mooney (1896) and the cruelly abbreviated one (by A. F. C. Wallace, 1965), there have been ever so many studies of this and similar outbreaks. Concomitant analytical efforts produced a new vocabulary: nativistic and/or revitalisation movements, crisis-cults etc. (cf. Weston LaBarre’s survey in C.A. 1976). Valuable studies kept, and still keep, appearing (Alice Fletcher, Wallace, Linton, L. Spier), and one wonders what exactly is the purpose of Alice P. Kehoe’s *Ghost Dance*.⁵⁷ The slim volume is not a survey of North American Indian movements, which would have to include Tecumseh, Pontiac,

Tencswatawa and others, but rather a testimony to the anguish an anthropologist can feel when contemplating the white man's works. We also get into the bargain an interesting account of the history of anthropological research on the N-A Indians and of the underlying, latent or patent, ideological presuppositions. But if Wounded Knee is given so much prominence (including Ortiz 1980), Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* should certainly have been mentioned in spite of its irritating weaknesses. The Spindlers accepted this study for the series "Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology". It is a case study indeed, perhaps not so much of the Ghost Dance as of the white man, especially of the sub-species *anthropologus sapiens*.

Historians of religion usually deal with "messianic" movements of the past. When messianisms in the classical sense no longer occur, similar phenomena, mainly in "primitive" societies, are studied by anthropologists—from the Ghost Dance (see above) to African "prophetic" movements to Melanesian cargo-cults. The term is also used, *per analogiam*, in the study of religions unrelated to biblical tradition e.g., Buddhism and Taoism. Some authors, wishing to avoid the specific associations attached to the word messianism, prefer millenarian, chiliast or similar terms. With the demise of (at least religious) messianism in the modern age, "utopian" thinking has assumed the inheritance. Launched on its modern career by Thomas More (on the word "utopia" there is a classical study by K. O. Kristeller), utopianism has, perhaps not so surprisingly, gathered momentum in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. After all, projecting futures is one of the most effective mechanisms of dealing with the present and of what the Germans would call *Gegenwartsbewältigung*. But systematic and interdisciplinary studies are still few and far between, and hence the three volumes edited by W. Vosskamp⁵⁸—the harvest of a colloquium lasting 2 years with the participation of 50 scholars—though not immediately concerned with religion, should widen our horizons too. Vol. 1 is mainly theoretical, and critically summarises the analyses of contemporary philosophy, sociology, history and literatures (English, German, Slav, French/Italian). The participation of historians is particularly significant because utopia is not only a matter of dreams and expectations. There have been utopian experiments and utopian communities galore. Vol. 2, after a brief glance at Greek traditions, deals with the history of literary and other expressions of utopianism, from the 16th to the 18th centuries (More, Robinson Crusoe, the transition from European dreams to "the American Dream"). Vol. 3 continues the same themes but extends the chronological scope to the 19th century (e.g., the *Bildungsroman* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*; utopian communes

in the U.S.), and brings us to the threshold of the transition from the 19th to the 20th century: "Utopia and Reform" v. "Utopia and Revolution". Here we have three volumes of consistently high quality. One can only hope that also non-German scholarship will take note of them.

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⁵¹ Yvon Belaval & Dominique Bourel, *Le siècle des lumieres et la Bible* (Paris, Beauchesne), 1986, paper, Fr.Frcs. 480.—, ISBN 2-7010-1093-4.

⁵² Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P.), 1985, pp. ix + 303, hc, £ 25.— ISBN 0-521-30088-6; paper £ 8.95, ISBN 0-521-31745-2.

⁵³ Peter Byrne, *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: the legacy of deism* (London & New York, Routledge), 1989, pp. xv + 271, cloth, £ 35.—, ISBN 0-415-04104-X.

⁵⁴ Eric J. Sharpe, *Nathan Söderblom and the Study of Religion* (Chapel Hill & London, Univ. of Alabama Press), 1990, pp. xxiii + 258, cloth, \$43.95, ISBN 00-8078-1868-2.

⁵⁵ Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think* (Princeton, Princeton U.P.) 1985, pp. lviii + 392, pb, \$9.95, ISBN 0-691-02034-5.

⁵⁶ Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P.), 1986, pp. 266, hc. £ 27.50 \$37.50, ISBN 0-521-3226-X; pb £ 8.95, \$12.95, ISBN 0-521-31114-4.

⁵⁷ Alice Beck Kehoe, *The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization* (New York, Holt Rinehart & Winston), 1989, pp. 155, ISBN 0-03-002852-3.

⁵⁸ Wilhelm Vosskamp (ed.), *Utopie-Forschung: interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie* (Stuttgart, Metzler), 1982, paper, vol. 1 pp. 430, DM 48.—; vol. 2 pp. 386, DM 42.—; vol. 3 pp. 470, DM 48.—. ISBN 3-476-00490-2.

BOOK REVIEWS

HOWARD EILBERG-SCHWARTZ, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1990 (XII, 304 p.) ISBN 0-253-20591-3 (cloth) \$ 35.00; \$ 17.95 (pbk.)

A standard approach considers Judaism a book religion. This approach emphasizes the rational Weberian elements such as the rabbi as a scholar, book learning, and synagogue worship with scriptural reading and preaching. Now this is not the only legitimate way of looking at Judaism. Before the Jews became “the people of the book”, they were (and continue to be) “the people of the body”. *The Savage in Judaism* makes a singularly important contribution to this less well-known but equally valid perspective. This view reveals, and takes seriously, a Judaism that expresses itself in body-related rituals of circumcision, in menstrual customs, and in avoiding or overcoming states of impurity. These aspects of ancient (and later) biblical religion makes Judaism look “primitive” and “savage” and therefore amenable to an anthropological analysis, especially to one that disregards and in fact discards the traditional distinction between “savage” and “modern” societies, finding “the savage” not only in ancient Jews but also in everyone of us. While this perspective on Judaism has been shared by a long list of scholars ever since the Victorian days of W. Robertson Smith and J.G. Frazer, it has gained momentum and new respectability since Mary Douglas published a chapter on the “abominations of Leviticus” in her celebrated book *Purity and Danger* (1966).

Eilberg-Schwartz considers the “priestly source” (called “P”) of the Pentateuch a foundational document of “savage” Judaism. That source, reconstructed by modern biblical scholarship as one of the leading voices speaking in the Pentateuch, is represented in texts such as the Genesis chap. 1 account of creation (with its command to be fruitful and to multiply), the Genesis chap. 17 report on Abraham’s covenant of circumcision, and of course the entire book of Leviticus. Eilberg-Schwartz’s suggestive use of the book of P, which dates from between the seventh and the fifth century BCE, draws the reader into the world of Israelite priests and shows their preoccupations and interests in a new way. Their focus on procreation, genealogy, and social as well as ritual boundaries demonstrates their concern about their identity.

In Israel, a priest is born, not made; and he must be "pure" in order to be able to perform ritual acts. Circumcision involves a complex symbolism of both purity and fertility. The cutting off of the foreskin exposes the maleness of a child, pulling the child away from the realm of women and setting it within the male line of descent as well as within God's covenant. Far from being a symbolic castration or menstruation, circumcision is essentially "a rite that marks the passage from the impurity of being born of a woman to the purity of life in a community of men" (175). At the same time, circumcision somehow ensures the production of semen and thus the continuity of the priestly lineage. (Here Eilberg-Schwartz could also have pointed out that P's injunction to be fruitful and to multiply had a special relevance when Jewish priests returned from the Babylonian captivity. They had to re-people a land whose population had suffered severe losses from war and deportation. See W. Brueggemann in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84, 1972, 397-414.)

Drawing upon the symbolic anthropology as practiced by M. Douglas, Victor Turner, and James W. Fernandez, Eilberg-Schwartz refines his analysis by studying the repercussions, the language and practice of circumcision have in Israelite culture; circumcision blood creates the divine covenant whereas menstrual blood contaminates; the priests conceptualize the fruit that grows on immature trees as its "foreskin" and the tree itself as "uncircumcised". He further enriches his analysis by drawing from a wide range of anthropological writings to which he makes frequent reference. Eilberg-Schwartz, unlike traditional biblical exegesis and true to his premise of "savaging Judaism", practices and defends cross-cultural comparison beyond the narrow world of the Ancient Near East. Comparison serves not only to undermine the dichotomy of advanced vs. traditional societies; it also serves as a substitute for "native exegesis" in that it helps us to establish possible answers to questions we would ask native informants. Eilberg-Schwartz's use of symbolic anthropology is significant as it does not aim at reconstructing historical developments, institutions, or social conditions poorly recorded in the Bible. Recent writers have often used anthropology to unveil social mechanisms (such as the economic system of ancient Israel) or to reconstruct history (the emergence of Israel as a state). Although these are also legitimate uses of anthropology, they often verge on conjectural history. Eilberg-Schwartz's approach can claim to achieve a higher degree of accuracy. Rather than producing conjectures, he explains the logic of what is actually well-attested in the texts themselves. Symbolic anthropology as practiced by Eilberg-Schwartz is an exegetical tool quite appropriate for dealing with textual sources such as "P".

The author's treatment of circumcision, which we tried to summarize, gives a glimpse of what to expect from other chapters which include a detailed discussion of the history of the opposition between Judaism and savage religions (an opposition often governed more by apologetic interests than by actual insight) and substantial chapters on "Animal Metaphors in the Rituals and Narratives of Israelite Religion", "Menstrual Blood, Semen, and Discharge", and finally, "The Status of Impurity". *The Savage in Judaism* thus addresses a wide range of topics relevant to sketching an anthropology of biblical and early rabbinical Judaism. Eilberg-Schwartz has written a rich, valuable and sophisticated book that makes him one of the leading interpreters of ancient Judaism.

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BERNHARD LANG

GERHARD J. BAUDY, *Die Brände Roms. Ein apokalyptisches Motiv in der antiken Historiographie*. Spudasmata 50. Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Olms 1991 (76 p.) ISBN 3-487-09480-0 DM 27.80

It would seem to be very hard to say something new about the burning down of Neronian Rome in 64 CE. Nonetheless, Gerhard Baudy, a classical philologist at the university of Kiel, succeeds in doing exactly that in this small booklet. His thesis is that it has too often been overlooked that both the conflagration of Rome in 390 BCE and the one in 64 CE were said to have started on the 19th of July, exactly as was the case with the burning down of Troy. Now these early fires may not be historical, but the important thing is that the 19th of July was the day of the rising of Sirius ('der Siriusfrühaufgang' = start of the dog-days), a date which can be demonstrated to have been traditionally a symbol, especially in Hellenistic Persia and Egypt, of crucial turning points in history (Sothis Year, Great Year, appearance of the phoenix, the eschatological conflagration, etc.). The author shows that the date of the appearance of the dog-star played a significant role in oriental apocalyptic literature that arose out of the 'geistige Widerstand gegen Rom' (Fuchs). This makes it very implausible that it was Nero himself who burnt down Rome (unimaginable anyway, says B.), but it strongly suggests that the city was set on fire by Orientals who hoped to provoke in such a way a worldwide uprising against Rome thus ushering in the end of Roman rule and/or world history. That act may have been triggered by the combination of

the public humiliation by Nero of an oriental king, Tiridates of Armenia, in 63 and the mythical associations of the supposed dates of the earlier great burnouts. So far so good. The author's next step is to track down the real culprits. B. thinks Nero was right in accusing the Christians. He tries to find proof that (not only Egyptians, Jews, and other Orientals, but also) Christians in Neronian Rome read anti-Roman prophecies (Christian ones) announcing the destruction of Rome by fire on the 19th of July. He finds the required evidence in a passage of Hippolytus on heretics (when?) who saw in Sirius a symbol of Christ's judgement by fire in the eschaton and in Clement of Rome's connection of the ascension of Sirius with the appearance of the phoenix. Suggesting that this is mid first century material he says that "later" (29) the author of the Apocalypse of John predicts Rome's conflagration. Also 2 Peter's use of Sodom and Gomorra typology in connection with the eschatological conflagration is adduced as evidence. At page 33, then, the author states that he has proved that the Christians had a motive to set Rome on fire on July 19, A.D. 64. But this chronological sloppiness is of course a weak point in the argumentation. B. tries to strengthen his case by having recourse to the theories of Eisler and Brandon about Jesus' and/or his disciples' zealous leanings. There he does make some interesting points but they are too speculative to corroborate his theory. I do not suggest that B. is completely wrong in his thesis. It is quite conceivable that Christians in a fanatically apocalyptic mood wanted to hasten the eschaton and felt supported therein by oriental speculations on the 19th of July. But I found B.'s arguments far from compelling. Nevertheless, this small and original book, with its very rich bibliography and notes, is much to be welcomed.

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INDIGENOUS EROTICISM AND COLONIAL MORALITY IN MEXICO: THE CONFESSION MANUALS OF NEW SPAIN

SYLVIA MARCOS

Summary

This article explores the impact of the Conquest on eroticism and the place of the feminine in 16th century indigenous society in Mexico. It shows how this most intimate area of human experience became the battleground of a war that amounted in part to a cultural annihilation. The article analyses one aspect of the missionaries' well-intentioned "battle to save people's souls".

Like in previous, internal forms of violent subjugation of one culture by another, the Spaniards destroyed local gods and temples. However, unlike previous "conquerors" who superimposed their beliefs upon local customs, the newcomers demanded a complete eradication of those customs, as if they only could save the Indians by destroying their identity, their culture's relation to reality and their very concept of time, space and of the person.

By condemning indigenous erotic practices and imposing unprecedented restraints on them, the missionaries altered the roots of ancient Mexican perceptions of the body and the cosmos.

Particular attention is paid to the confession manuals, written as an answer to the Spaniards' discovery "that lust was the Indian's most frequent sin". These manuals are considered here as instruments of the alteration of indigenous perceptions. In these manuals the repetition of the same excruciating questions tended to graft guilt onto the Mesoamerican conscience and thus eradicate the Indians perception of eroticism in its sacred and vitalizing dimension.

Commentaries of the old song of the women of Chalco attempt to recapture, through the playful voices of women speaking openly, some of the flavor of a very different symbolic universe.

Get ready, my little sisters:
let us go and gather flowers...
with my garland of flowers adorn yourself,
my flowers they are, and I a women of Chalco.
...Among joyful pleasures we will laugh.
(Song of the Women of Chalco)

Introduction

The 500th anniversary of the "encounter" of the Old and New Worlds provides an excellent opportunity to look at what we know

about pre-Columbian societies in terms of sexuality and eroticism and the place and function of the feminine. This delicate and intimate area of human experience was an important battleground in the conquest of the Americas, especially in Latin America where Iberian Catholicism confronted and ultimately dominated the region's rich civilizations with their complex cosmologies, thereby extinguishing many cultural attitudes and expressions.

While it is impossible to reconstruct the pre-conquest environment in order to ascertain the values and attitudes surrounding sexuality and eroticism, we do have recourse to many texts, objects and testimonies concerning the pre-conquest era. Similarly, there is a wealth of material from colonial times that reveal the course of this "battle for souls" as the missionaries viewed their work, or the process of cultural annihilation as the indigenous inhabitants experienced it.

Forced Catechization

Catholicism was established in the New World frequently through force and sometimes through violence and bloodshed. Although charitable work was carried out by many missionaries, their efforts could not counteract the destruction wrought by others nor the overwhelming impact of a new religion and culture on the indigenous one. The abuses that characterize the history of the Spanish Catholic Church in the New World were often sanctioned by Church authorities. When outright abuses, injustice and excess were not the case, then the "lesser evil" the conquered Indians endured was profound disapproval of their way of living and total repudiation of their world view.

Spain's economic exploitation of the Americas was sanctioned by the objective of christianizing the Indians. Almost any means was allowed to achieve this end. The colonists made use of various legal mechanisms based on pre-Hispanic institutions to extract labor from converted Indians. Among these were the "mita" in South America and the "tequio" in Mexico which were systems of voluntary communal labor. They also introduced Iberian institutions such as the "encomienda" which put entire Indian villages under the control of the Spanish colonizers. In them, Indians were obliged

to work without pay while, in exchange, the grant holder or "encomendero" promised the Church to christianize them. Frequently the fulfillment of this requirement was reduced to providing a half hour of catechism per week, a condition met sporadically, when not entirely ignored (Las Casas, 1552).

The Franciscans (1524), Dominicans (1536), Augustinians (1553) and later the Jesuits (1572) who converted and catechized the indigenous populations were, for the most part, dedicated and humble religious, concerned about the well-being of the Indians. Some friars who participated in the colonization, especially before 1570 during the so-called "spiritual conquest" period (Ricard, 1933), vigorously opposed the abuses of the secular colonizers. However, they were also paternalistic, authoritarian (Lopez, 1976) and, above all, intolerant of the beliefs of a religious symbolic system foreign to them (Bonfil, 1988). Some friars glimpsed the validity and richness of Mesoamerican civilization, but the Church hierarchy viewed their accounts with suspicion and disapproval. The famous defender of the Indians, Fray Bartolome de las Casas, for example, wrote his controversial *Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies* in 1552. Its publication provoked discord and animosity on the part of the friars, his brothers in catechization. Las Casas was rabidly persecuted because he denounced abuses of the Indians by his co-religionists. His second work, *Apologetica Historia de las Indias*, was not published until 1909.

The majority of the clerics who came to new Spain to catechize were much less understanding than Las Casas. At times, the intolerant behavior of some clerics became so extreme that church authorities removed them from their posts as was the case with the Franciscan bishop of Yucatan, Diego de Landa. He punished the Mayan Indians he found celebrating the rites of their religion in a hidden temple in the jungle by hanging them by their hands and feet. Among the legal briefs or "allegations" of the time is one written in 1562 by Diego de Landa defending himself in a court proceeding where he was accused of having burned Indians alive. Although he was removed from his post, he was reinstated as bishop several years later.

However, just before his death he apparently repented of all the damage his excess of holy rage caused, because he tried to rescue

some of what his violence had destroyed. Thus he compiled, with the help of knowledgeable local informants, the meanings of some 20 Mayan glyphs. He also wrote *Relation of Things in Yucatan*. This essential work for the study of Mayan culture was written by the person responsible for tremendous losses in this region: he had burned mounds of sculptures, codices, terracottas, jewels and other expressions of Mayan culture.

In their chronicles of life in the New World, clerics were required to emphasize the "cruel" and "demonic" character of indigenous Americans. Their writings were published only when overstocked with phrases such as "these Indians have the devil as their idol," or "these natives live degrading lives," or "it is astonishing to see how bestial they are, how they lack understanding." These formulas legitimized the abuse of the Indians that occurred under the pretext of catechizing them. Even Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, considered one of the most reliable sources for pre-Columbian times, conformed to this requirement. An attitude that showed too much understanding might have provoked charges by ecclesiastics that he was an "idolater." After several pages about the achievements of indigenous culture, he seems to reconsider and try to correct himself. Despite such contradictions, his investigation was without precedent in scope and method. The questionnaire he used to gather information on Nahua culture is perhaps the first such systematic questionnaire in history. With good reason he is regarded as the father of ethnology (Sahagun, 1982).

But no matter how valuable his work nor how measured his tone, he nevertheless portrayed the Indians as "bloody," qualified their ancestral customs as "idolatries," called their divinities "devils," and exaggerated the quantitative importance of the sacrifices (Pagden, 1985). In spite of this, his *General History of the Things of New Spain* is one of the most trustworthy documents on Nahuatl culture.

The Indians of the Americas often chose to take refuge with the missionaries who, in order to catechize them, defended them from the voracious Spanish colonizers and their ambition for quick fortune. As Bonfil (1987) and Lopez Austin (1976) point out, the option offered by the missionaries was the desperate choice of the lesser evil. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that although

evangelizers during the era of the spiritual conquest did not, for the most part, torture the Indians, nor subject them to forced labor, nor let them die of hunger, nor rape the women, their “colonization” took place at deeper levels. In order to “save” them, it seemed necessary to destroy their identity. This negation of the indigenous self altered the way the Indians conceptualized themselves, their world, the earth, the sun, space and time, and the divinized cosmic forces. Genocide and ethnocide were arrayed against them: genocide despoiled them and even deprived them of life, and ethnocide devastated them spiritually and negated their culture’s ways of perceiving the cosmos.

Concerning this, Gruzinski comments:

...(H)owever brutal the aggressions and impositions of the Indian victors might have been—the Triple Alliance, for example—they respected the equilibrium local cultures had in relation to reality, time, space, the person...At most, they imposed practices and customs that came from the same Mesoamerican cultural context. With Christianity, things were different. Christians, the same as the former invaders, burned temples and imposed their gods. But sharing or imposing theirs on what already existed was unacceptable to the Christians; instead they demanded the annihilation of local cults. They were not satisfied with eliminating the priests and part of the nobility; the Spaniards laid claim to a monopoly on the priesthood and the sacred, and thereby the definition of reality (1988 p. 195-196).

Norms and Sexuality

Sexual norms in Mesoamerica and the entire American continent differed radically from those imported by Catholic missionaries. This is not to say that total liberty existed: that would be impossible in any cultural and religious system. But the prevalent norms revolved around a significantly different valuing of gender, sexuality and eroticism.

Some norms governing Indian society before colonization can be discerned in the records of their rituals. The transition to young adulthood required a family rite. Sahagun records speeches that Nahuatl parents addressed to their daughters and sons at that moment in their lives. The discourses reveal what the Aztecs considered dignified behavior in their society. It should be noted that continence, respect, humility towards elders and fulfillment of religious obligations were expected of both sexes. Even though

identical behavior was not expected from men and women, expectations for conduct in these areas were similar (Sahagun, 1982). Likewise, both genders received equivalent punishments for the same sexual transgression (Torquemada, 1615; Las Casas, 1552).

Diego de Landa expressed his surprise at the ease with which marriages were dissolved. According to his Mayan chronicles, women could leave their husbands and change partners or return home without reproach (Landa, 1966). In indigenous Mesoamerica, marriage was not indissoluble (Gruzinski, 1988). Investigators mention provisional marriages in pre-conquest Mexico (Lopez Austin, 1982b) and in Mayan culture a wife or husband could temporarily or permanently interrupt the marriage. But this was not so for the Spaniards whose influence on the Indians is described in the following text by de Landa:

...(W)ith the same ease, men left their spouses and children with no fear that others would take them as wives...and now, since the Spaniards in this matter (when women leave their husbands for other men) kill theirs, they (the Mayans) begin to mistreat and even kill their wives...(1966 p. 42-43).

In the Andean region of Peru, trial marriage, called "sirvinakuy," is still practiced (Barrionuevo, 1973). Going back to Incan marriage customs, it survives as "a time of mutual service" when both parties try out their capacity for a harmonious, productive life together. If, after a year, one or both decide that the union does not have what is necessary for a permanent bond, they may separate and begin family life anew with another person with community approval.

Confession Manuals

Lust, the priests complained, was the most frequent sin, not stealing, murder, lying or drunkenness. In documents concerning Aztec, Mayan or Incan morals, it is difficult to identify the value judgements of the Catholic evangelizers (Lopez Austin, 1982a). Nevertheless, wide divergencies between indigenous norms and Catholic morality were evident.

The divergence was so wide that the missionary priests used minutely detailed questionnaires to conduct confessions. The inquisitorial questions exposed the sexual conduct of the new con-

verts to the disapproval of the confessor. Other areas of misconduct were probed, but the questions relating to sexual behavior show one of the instruments used to inculcate Christian morality.

In his analysis of the confession manuals of the first two centuries of colonization, Gruzinski (1987) discovered an exaggerated concern with sexuality as revealed by specific questions about sexual practices. For example, in the confession manual of Father Joan Baptista, 69% of the questions refer to sex, while 63% of those of Martin de Leon and Juan de la Anunciacion concern this topic. Such preoccupation with the sixth commandment, only one of ten, gives the appearance of an uncommon, obsessive interest on the part of the confessors and/or of the institution whose beliefs they represented.

Thus, in the *Great Confession Manual in the Mexican Language and in Spanish* by Alonso de Molina (1565) we find:

Tell me, my son,
Did you lie with a women who was not yours?
How many times?
Did you lie with your wife making use of the proper entry?
Or did you take her by the back way thus committing the nefarious sin (of sodomy)?
How many times?
Did you lie with your wife while she had her month?
How many times?
Did you lie with your wife avoiding the procreation of children?
Because you are poor and needy or because you had a fight with her?
How many times?
Have you committed the sin against nature carrying out this act with an animal?
How many times?
When you were drunk, out of your senses, did you fall into the abominable sin of sodomy with another man?
How many times?
Have you done anything improper or dirty with yourself or with another man?
How many times?

(folios 32-35)

There were also questions specifically for women. In the *Manual of Confessions in the Mexican Language and in Spanish* by Father Juan Baptista (1599), we read:

Are you a married woman, widow, virgin or have you lost your virginity?
Did you have sexual relations with another woman like yourself and she with you?

How many times?
 Did you desire anyone?
 Have you touched the lower parts of a man with pleasure, desiring in this way to commit sin?

(folios 48 verso 51)

In another, *The Manual for Administering the Holy Sacraments* By Fray Angel Serra (1697), we find the following questions, also for women's confessions:

Have you sinned with a woman?
 Have you kissed a woman?
 Was she your mother, the one who gave you birth?
 Did you sin with a woman using both parts?
 Did you sin with your sister?
 Have you sinned with a woman while she took the position of an animal on all fours, or did you put her like that, desiring to commit sin with her?
 And have you sinned with another woman as if you were man and woman?
 How many times?

(1731 edition folios 111-136)

Even though these texts speak for themselves, it is important to stress that for the inhabitants of Mesoamerica, their bodies, their pleasures, the experience of sexuality must have been a very different matter. It was necessary to repeat these detailed questions hundreds of times in confession in order to instill in them the Catholic concept of sex as sinful. Even married life, legalized and blessed by the church, was subject to inquisitorial suspicion: "...remember the times that...you provoked your wife in order to have access to her" (A. Molina, 1569).

In these manuals we also find an immoderate zeal for quantifying, something alien to Indian thought (Gruzinski, 1988). In the *Confessionario de Indios* (1761) Carlos C. Velazquez reports these answers:

I changed my correct position because I reached for my wife from behind: seventy two times.
 I desired to sin with my mother and had bad thoughts about many women. They can't be counted, I can't say how many times...sixty-six times (pp. 9-12).

Martin de Leon explains:

They finally say twice, and then for the rest of the confession, it is the same...these natives give the number used for the first sin they confess for all the rest (Gruzinski, 1986 p. 35).

Francisco Guerra (1971) confirms that these quantities had no meaning since the same numbers were repeated for all sins. According to Perez de Velasco in 1766:

The Indian at the feet of the confessor is supremely inadequate...the rules (of confession) are for the Indian in most cases, impractical, due to his ignorance, his crudeness, his lack of breadth, his inconstancy, his great unfaithfulness...understanding we cannot give them (Gruzinski, 1986 p. 36).

Studying the underlying reason for their exaggerated and repetitive quantification of sins, Gruzinski concludes that "without understanding and interiorizing the conceptual framework of Christianity, any attempt to total up sinful acts is as useless as it is senseless." The Indians chose numbers arbitrarily and repeated them (1986). The use of numerical exaggeration and repetition, moreover, can be seen as a way of rejecting what was for the Indians a meaningless exercise. It served as a strategy to escape total control over their actions and pleasures.

In contrast to the sexual morality that the missionaries tried to impose on the Indians, however, the sexual abuses perpetrated by the Spanish appear even more startling.

The Spaniards regarded, as part of their booty, the "right" to sexually use all the female Indians in their territory. On the basis of this "right," landowners claimed the privilege of raping all virgin women on their plantations. (Remnants of these abuses persist in contemporary Mexico. "Pernada" or first night rights—the landowner has relations with a new bride before her husband does—was studied by M. Olivera on the coffee plantations of Chiapas in southern Mexico [1977]. Barrionuevo mentions that this practice exists in contemporary Peru [1937]).

Sexual Spirituality

While throughout the Christian West sex has been considered shameful and troublesome and great energy is dedicated to ascetic repression of sexual impulses, the ancient cultures of America placed it at the center of religious rituals (Lopez Austin 1982a).

It is true that the Spaniards must have been hard pressed to understand the tacit joyful eroticism, openly practised, of religious fertility festivals...(Lopez Austin, 1982b p. 162).

For them, the union with cosmic forces was symbolized through sexual rituals in Aztec temples (Quezada, 1975). Priestesses were important celebrants in such rites. In ancient America, sexuality was a vital part of daily life and had an essential place in religious ceremonies. The orgasmic experience united humans with the gods.

Texts recounting these ritual practices are complemented by examples in terracotta figures. Funerary figurines of Mochica and Chimu in Peru and of the Nahua region of the Valley of Mexico show ceremonial and ordinary sexual practices of the inhabitants of ancient America. Despite the fact that objects with sexual content such as these were selectively destroyed by Catholic missionaries, some examples have survived (many can be seen in the Larco Herra Museum in Lima, Peru). The multiple possibilities of sexual positions shown in archeological pieces (terracotta figures, paintings, bas reliefs) testify to a rich eroticism.

The confession manuals of Molina, Baptista, Serra and others seem to indicate the missionaries' uneasiness over the diversity in sexual pleasures enjoyed by the souls in their charge. The priests had to repeatedly describe their limited idea of sexuality so that the vital Indians could understand that what for them was often a link with the gods was, in their new religion, always a sin, fault or aberration. Through evangelization guilt was grafted onto the Mesoamerican conscience. The morality of negation and abstinence propagated by the missionaries became one more weapon used in the process of violent acculturation (Bastide 1947).

Eroticism and Women

Concepts of the sacred, images of the divine, and ceremonial ritualization of the interaction between the divinities and humans give us an insight into social structure as well. The gods of a culture are frequently reflections of its human members: divinity created in the "image and likeness" of women and men (Baez-Jorge, 1988).

In Mesoamerican civilizations, women, priestesses and goddesses express a particular form of being female. Here we are not speaking of matriarchy but of a certain complementarity of both genders. We are not describing female power in the same areas as

men, nor are we referring to socially productive work carried out in similar spheres as men. We refer to complementarity or the duality of complementary opposites, one of the basic elements that gives coherence to ancient Mesoamerican civilization (Lopez Austin, 1982a).

Coatlicue, Teteoinan, Toci, Tonantzin, Ixcuiname are some of the goddesses in the Aztec pantheon (Baez-Jorge, 1988; Marcos, 1975, 1988). We will briefly mention Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl who are central to this essay because of their connection with sexual morality and what we refer to as sexual spirituality.

Eroticism and the Goddesses of Love

Ancient Nahuas had two divinities who represented what we call sexuality: Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl. Mesoamerican spiritual sexuality is revealed especially in the cult of these two goddesses. Xochiquetzal, the goddess of lovers, was the patroness of ritual sexual relations (Quezada, 1975). With this goddess, the emphasis is on amorous activity rather than on fertility. She protected illicit sexual relationships and was the patroness of the priestesses chosen to perform ritual sexual relations.

Tlazolteotl, on the other hand, was the goddess of sexual pleasure and sensuality associated with fertility. She is represented as a woman at the moment of birth and is the protector of pregnant women and midwives. Tlazolteotl is also the goddess of medicine, medicinal herbs and also of the healers “who provide herbs for abortion” (Sahagun).

Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl were the Mesoamerican divinities to whom the Indians confessed. Both goddesses represented the female principle before whom penitents implored pardon for their transgressions. The power of these goddesses was invoked to counteract the harmful effects of their devotees' erring conduct.

The cult of these goddesses was a challenge to Christian categories. On one hand, Xochiquetzal is the goddess and patron of illicit sexual relations (Quezada, 1975), and on the other, Tlazolteotl is the protector of fertility but also of abortion. Both goddesses offer forgiveness through a confession ritual. Of course, in the Christian tradition there could never be divine protection for

what is illicit, nor sacred wisdom for abortion, nor confession to incarnations of the feminine. Here again are elements of the Mesoamerican religious universe that did not fit the evangelizers' categories.

The panorama of divine feminine powers and deified presences included women who died in childbirth and were transformed into goddesses: the Cihuateteo who supported the sun from its zenith to its setting. The mother of god was Coatlicue. The mother of the people was Tonantzin, and the Ixuiname held up the sky as pillars of the Nahua universe. These sacred images gave the feminine pole importance. It was a very different symbolic universe from that of Christianity with its masculine trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Song of the Women of Chalco

The ancient Nahuas developed the art of poetry to a high level. Garibay gives us translations of the poetry in which the inhabitants of Mesoamerica excelled. Among the selected poems translated by this author, the "Song of the Women of Chalco" is one that for its erotic and metaphorical character and its sexual symbolism is important to include at length. (Chalco is a town near Mexico City).

Beyond its historical, political and ritual interpretations, the song provides a glimpse into an eroticism that takes delight in sexual relations as the playful voices of women speak openly of sexual desire and express a voluptuous sensuality at odds with 16th century Iberian Catholic sexual morality.

While probably not "an isolated poetic phenomenon" whose uniqueness could possibly be due to the censoring of similar material (Lopez Austin, 1982b), the Song of Chalco stands almost alone. Two songs referring to lesbian love are found in the same collection (Bierhorst, 1985).

Full of metaphors, the song is a dialogue between various women and the warrior king Axayacatl.

Get ready, my little sisters:
let us go and gather flowers...
with my garland of flowers adorn yourself,
my flowers they are, and I a woman of Chalco.

...and now, raise a song to dear King Axayacatito:
...By myself I raise my snake and make it stand up straight:
With it I will give pleasure to my darling Axayacatito.
Ay, my beautiful and dear king Axayacatito,
if you are truly a man, where you will have much to keep you busy.
...Take my poor ashes, then go on and work me.
Come and take it, take it, my joy:
Oh, my little boy, give yourself to me, my darling boy.
Among joyful pleasures we will laugh.
We will enter happiness, and I will learn.
Now you move, now you move your hands,
already you want to catch hold of my nipples.
Almost ready, my love!
...I give you my womb...there it is...
Here I have my husband: I can no longer dance with the bone;
I can't make room for the spindle:
How you enjoy me, my child!
What can I do? ... I accept!
Is this how the plumed shield becomes pregnant
in the middle of the plain? I will give myself
...Fit yourself to me, show your virility.

Perhaps my women's self will do crazy things,
my heart is ashamed.
What remedy is there? What will I do? Who will I have for a man?
Even though I wear a skirt and a blouse...
Come, take my tortilla dough, you king Axayacatito,
let me touch you...
Give it pleasure and raise up our snake,
again and once again!
...After, my little child, to give you pleasure!
Now I have no skirt, no blouse,
I am a little woman and here I am...
Slowly undo your skirts,
slowly open your legs, women of Tlatelolco,
those who are not going to war, Huhu!
keep your eyes on Chalco!

(Garibay, 1964 Vol. III pp. 55-60).

The song of the Women of Chalco recalls the Bible's Song of Songs, but this erotic Nahuatl poem is exclusively from the side of female experience and sensuality. It is the woman who is presented as inciting and directing the vital sexual force of the cosmos.

Eroticism and Old Age

Texts containing accounts of pre-conquest customs and mores indicate that for the Mesoamericans old age, the last stage of life,

was not bereft of eroticism and power. According to Quezada:

The old person is not censured if he or she still has erotic desires even though they are regarded socially as impotent and sterile. To the contrary, the older woman is thought of as insatiable sexually. Certain texts develop the theme of the "older woman crazy for love." (1975 p. 53).

In Sahagun we read the response of an older woman (a "grand-mother") concerning sexual desire:

"As old men, you no longer desire bodily pleasure for having indulged so often as youth, because your potency and seed have been used up. But we women never get tired of these doings nor do we get enough because our bodies are like a deep chasm that never fills up; it receives everything given it and desires more and demands more, and if we don't do this, we aren't alive" (Sahagun, 1982 Vol. II p. 145).

Active sexuality in the old occurred in the wider context of Mesoamerican culture where old people were considered powerful. Even today, among Mayan groups of the sierra of Chiapas, the old can accumulate *k'al*: "The older the person, the greater quantity of *k'al* he or she possesses" (Favre, 1984). This is the vital essence that not only animates all living things; it is indestructible and gives special powers to those who possess it. Old people, infused with *k'al*, can be as influential and even dangerous because of their power as are shamans and healers.

Above all, it is through the old that the treasure of an eminently oral tradition such as that of Mesoamerica are transmitted. Sahagun compiled his great work on the Nahua culture thanks to extensive interviews with old people—privileged sources of ancestral culture—who provided him with invaluable data about the ancient Nahuas.

In Mesoamerica, it was the old person who was the most complete and powerful in the social fabric. He or she enjoyed moral privileges and ethical demands were relaxed. There was also greater freedom concerning drink and physical labor. The transformation that the old experienced as reduced physical strength due to their many years of life, manifested itself as gains in spiritual, religious and political dimensions. Old people formed the essential nucleus of a community. They even had their own god in Mesoamerican pantheon: Huehueteotl, the old god.

Conclusion

The sexuality that entered into conflict with the conquering ideology in Latin America cannot be precisely defined in contemporary terms. The only certainty is that its sense of eroticism, of the sexual in its sacred and vitalizing dimension, contrasted sharply with the dark and shameful view of sexuality of sixteenth century Catholicism. It also contrasts just as sharply with contemporary ideas of sexuality and sexual liberation.

Half a millennium ago the process of subjecting the part of the world known today as Latin America to Iberian Catholic missionaries, soldiers and colonists began. In no other region was the arrival of Catholicism so abrupt or its imposition so violent. In Mexico, but also in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia, the appetites of the conquerors and the zeal of the missionaries combined to destroy indigenous culture. While the first group exploited and abused the native inhabitants, the latter condemned their very way of being in the universe.

The Indian population, steadily decimated by disease and the effects of exploitation, witnessed the repudiation of the norms that maintained their society in balance, the prohibition of their life-renewing rituals, the negation of their way of perceiving the cosmos and their place in it. Even their sense of their own physical bodies was tampered with and turned into a source of guilt. The detailed and inquisitorial confession manuals were weapons in the war of acculturation.

The inhabitants of Central and South America were told that their goddesses and gods and the forces of the universe they relied on were the work of the evil one. What for the Indians was their way of participation in the power and harmony of the cosmos was declared base and vile. The sexual, as a life-giving force, had sustained both the cosmos and the individual within a greater order. Its practice was surrounded by rules and norms whose observance was essential for the proper functioning of the universe. As the sustenance of the universe, it had a central role in collective religious ritual. To have it torn out of the temple and thrust into the dark, as it were, disrupted the indigenous culture at its core.

Through the repression of indigenous eroticism, Catholic morality shook the foundation of indigenous cosmology.

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ANCIENT HINDUISM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION

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Summary

The paper is conceptually divided into four parts. In the first part the widely held view that ancient Hinduism was not a missionary religion is presented. (The term ancient is employed to characterize the period in the history of Hinduism extending from fifth century B.C.E. to the tenth century. The term 'missionary religion' is used to designate a religion which places its followers under an obligation to missionize.) In the second part the conception of conversion in the context of ancient Hinduism is clarified and it is explained how this conception differs from the notion of conversion as found in Christianity. In the third part the view that ancient Hinduism was not a missionary religion is challenged by presenting textual evidence that ancient Hinduism was in fact a missionary religion, inasmuch as it placed a well-defined segment of its members under an obligation to undertake missionary activity. Such historical material as serves to confirm the textual evidence is then presented in the fourth part.

I

The student of the history of ancient Hinduism soon faces a paradox. He is told that it was not possible to convert to Hinduism as it was an ethnic religion, possessing a caste system based on birth.¹ He is also, however, told about the spread of Hinduism to southeast Asia.² If people could not convert to Hinduism, how could the people of southeast Asia become Hindus, as the Hindu presence there cannot be explained merely in terms of Hindu migrations.³ It is the purpose of this paper to resolve this dilemma, a dilemma posed by G. Coedes, the pre-eminent scholar of the Indianization of southeast Asia, as follows: "How can we explain this maritime drive of a people who regarded crossing the black water and contact with the *mleccha* barbarians as bringing defilement and pollution?" How pervasive these social constructs are, may be gauged, if somewhat lightheartedly, from the fact that the great Indologist A.L. Basham describes himself as a "friendly *mleccha*" in the preface to his famous book.⁴ The word *mleccha* is a

generic Hindu term for a foreigner, often with the connotation of his or her being a non-Indian and a barbarian.⁵

II

Two hypotheses have been developed to account for the motivation underlying this religious expansion. They have been called the Brahman hypothesis and the Trader-Merchant hypothesis by Larus.⁶ If the latter be referred to as the Vaiśya hypothesis one obtains a much more coherent picture of expansion in terms of Hindu social terminology. We are, however, concerned here with the view that the two have been offered as competing hypotheses: “The first stresses the part played by Brahmins and minimizes trade and commerce; the second stresses the role of India’s mercantile class and their desire to profit from the burgeoning Far East trade and downgrades the prominence of Brahmins”.⁷

The scenario presented is as follows. The political turmoil of the first few centuries of the common era caused by foreign invasions from the northwest, combined with the success of the heterodoxies of Buddhism and Jainism placed the elitist and purist Brahmins in a precarious position, impelling them to move on. “The first migration of ultra-orthodox Brahmins may have left northern India to seek relief for reasons as fundamental as these. The destination of some *émigrés* probably was south India, the lands where the Dravidians lived. For other Brahmins, however, quitting India completely may not have been too radical a departure from tradition to reassert their cultural superiority and, hopefully, regain purity by appropriate rituals. The injunctions against sea voyages and residence abroad may not have been too great a price to pay for such opportunities. Beyond the seas and thousands of miles from the Indian subcontinent, Brahmins could both free themselves of *mleccha* pressures and also Buddhist-Jain campaigns to subvert their allegiance to Hinduism. Another complementary version of this theory maintains that Hindus were invited to settle the southeast Pacific region by native leaders who heard of ‘the Brahmins’ superior cultural achievements and strong religious leadership”.⁸

Even in the context of the Trader-Merchant hypothesis the

Brahmins figure in two ways. (1) "A few renegade Brahmins ... probably accompanied the initial waves of traders ... and Brahmins followed in later periods"⁹ but they are not to be "considered as leaders or initiators of Indian colonial movements"¹⁰; (2) the movement of the traders out of India was provoked by the movement of the Brahmins within India. "The Dravidians' conversion to Hinduism and their acceptance of its societal norms, as explained previously, took place only when Brahmins, finding in the north a continuing threat to their caste purity, re-located in the south and began to influence Dravidian behaviour. This development reached something of a climax during the centuries immediately before the Christian era. It is possible therefore that disgruntled Dravidian sailors, rejecting the Brahmin campaign against deep sea travel, could find ships going to *suvarṇabhūmi* and *suvarṇadvīpa* ready to sign them on."¹¹ The words *suvarṇabhūmi* and *suvarṇadvīpa* literally mean 'golden land' and 'golden island'. The former is usually taken to refer to Burma or Malaya¹² and the latter to Sumatra in Indonesia.¹³

I maintain that both these hypotheses overlook a central element in the situation—that classical Hinduism provides an identifiable model of Hindu¹⁴ missionary activity which has been virtually totally disregarded in this context. This model can be identified in the *Manusmṛti* itself, which is assigned to the second century at the latest and is considered the law-book par excellence of ancient Hindu culture.¹⁵ Moreover, there is evidence that the *Manusmṛti* itself moved to southeast Asia, perhaps as a result of the very movement for which it provided an ideology.¹⁶ The kind of Brahmanical corps it encouraged can actually be identified in Cambodia.¹⁷ This suggests that the *Manusmṛti* merits a much more careful examination in the context of Hindu expansion than has hitherto been the case. While it may be true that in some respects the importance of the *Manusmṛti* has been exaggerated¹⁸; in this respect its relevance has been unwisely ignored.

III

A cursory examination of the *Manusmṛti* seems to support the idea that the southeast Asian expansion of Hinduism may have been a flight from its rigidity rather than an expansion fuelled by its

ideology. Firstly, the *Manusmṛti* distinguishes clearly between the “Hindus” and the non-Hindus who are called Dasyus (X.45). It is further noteworthy that the distinction is not based on language but on religion (X.45). All Hindus belong to the four *varṇas* and “there is no fifth” (X.4; read again with X.45). The picture which emerges from these passages is that of a closed system, hierarchically structured, with the Brahmins at the top (X.3) ideally dwelling in a narrow band of land called Āryāvarta whose dimensions are specified not with Purāṇic exaggeration but with geographical precision (II.21-25). How indeed could a religion with such a narrow vision spread beyond its own borders, not to speak of beyond India? Is it the case that there were forces at work—political, social, religious, etc. not recognized in the Law of Manu at all, or only dimly recognized, which alone can account for the spread of Hinduism to southeast Asia or does the *Manusmṛti* itself, appearances notwithstanding, provide a model of Hindu missionary expansion?

IV

But what does it mean to be missionary in Hindu terms? It is important to clarify this point before proceeding further.

Each religion has its own view of conversion. In Christianity, for instance, conversion means accepting Jesus Christ as sole saviour and typically involves joining a church. In Islam, conversion means accepting Muḥammad as the last Prophet along with the sole divinity of Allah and becoming a member of the Muslim community (*ummah muslimah*). In classical Hinduism, conversion meant the acceptance of the *varṇa*-model. It represented the key metaphor—and corresponds to the membership of a *church* in Christianity and of the *ummah* in Islam. It also implied the acceptance of the Vedas and derivative literature in Hinduism, just as membership of the church implied the acceptance of Christian scriptures in Christianity. The acceptance of the *Shari'ah*, which went hand in hand with becoming a Muslim, provides an interesting parallel from Islam, for the acceptance of the *varṇa* similarly was part and parcel of the process of joining the Hindu community.

Each religion possesses not only its own view of conversion but also its own view about the status of the proselyte prior to conversion. In Christianity, the non-Christian is outside the pale of salvation prior to conversion and may even be in a diabolical state. The outsider's position in Islam is more interesting and more comparable to that in classical Hinduism. According to the Qur'ān all the people of the world have been recipients of revelation in the past—it is the *final* revelation which is vouchsafed to them through the Qur'ān. It is not the case that they were in a state of revelatory deprivation prior to the Qur'ān. They have *a* revelation. In the Qur'ān now they have access to *the* revelation.

Just as it is the belief of the Qur'ān that God had sent revelation to *all* the peoples of the world prior to the Qur'ān (35:24, 13:7), it is the belief of the *Manusmṛti* that *all* the peoples of the world were originally encompassed within the *varṇa* scheme. With the passage of time, however, the system fell in disuse among them and they became lapsed “Hindus”, so to day. That this is clearly the case becomes apparent from a perusal of the text and commentary of *Manusmṛti* X, 45: “*All the tribes of this world, which are excluded from (the community of) those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet (of Brahman) are called Dasyus, ...*”¹⁹ The commentary of Kullūka is unambiguous on this point—that all the non-Aryan Dasyu peoples *originally* belonged to the *varṇa*-order: *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-vaiśya-śūdrāṇām kiryāloṇpādīnā yā jātayo bāhyā jātā ... te dasyavaḥ sarve smṛtāḥ*.²⁰ That is to say: Dasyus comprise those peoples who were excluded on account of the disappearance of the usages of the *varṇas*.

In other words, the classical Hindu missionary position as found in Manu can be reduced to four propositions: (1) the whole world is divisible between Āryas and Dasyus; (2) the Āryas follow the *varṇa* system; (3) the Dasyus used to observe the *varṇa* system but do not any more. That is what makes them Dasyus. (4) Missionary activity consists in making the Dasyus revert to the earlier practice of following the *varṇa* order. In Manu's formulation of the classical Hindu position, *reversion is conversion*. Alternatively, conversion is reversion.

V

It should no longer come as a surprise, therefore, that a closer examination of the *Manusmṛti* reveals the existence of what may be called a *classical Hindu model* for proselytization which specifies both (1) those who are to carry out this missionary activity and (2) the people among whom this missionary activity is to be carried out.

Those who are to carry out the mission are described in verses II.17-20:

17. That land, created by the gods, which lies between the two divine rivers Sarasvatī and Dr̥ṣadvatī, the (sages) call Brahmāvarta.

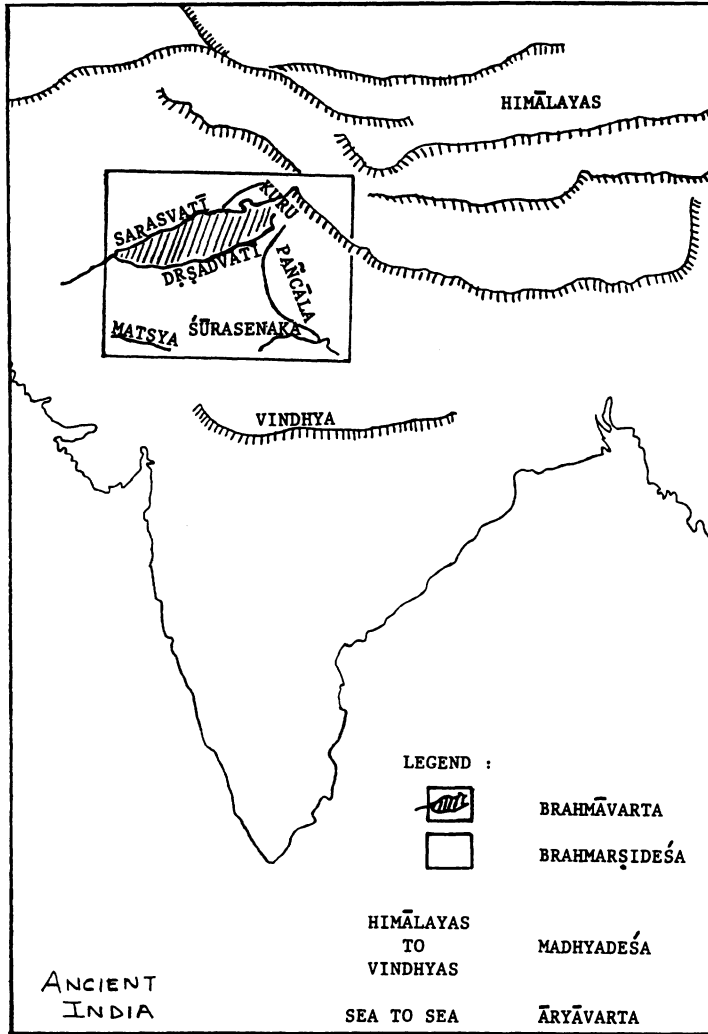
18. The custom handed down in regular succession (since time immemorial) among the (four chief) castes (*varṇa*) and the mixed (races) of that country, is called the conduct of virtuous men.

19. The plain of the Kurus, the (country of the) Matsyas, Pañcālas, and Śūrasenakas, these (form) indeed, the country of the Brahmar̥ṣis (Brahmanical sages, which ranks) immediately after Brahmāvarta.

20. From a Brāhmaṇa, born in that country, let all men on earth learn their several usages.²¹

The last verse is the key one; one might say that the tail wags the dog. The word used for *earth* is *pr̥thvī* and *all the people of the earth* are referred to (*sarvamānavāḥ*). The statement is direct and unambiguous, the use of the *vidhi* form of *śikṣ* (to learn) even precludes the glib dismissal of the verse as *arthavāda* or exaggeration, by the rules of Mīmāṃsā exegesis. Nor can it be dismissed as a stray verse of little significance as it is also found in other branches of Hindu literature.²²

In other words, the Brahmins of Brahmāvarta are charged by the *Manusmṛti* with the universal mission which *contrasts* with the more local vision of the Brahmins of Āryāvarta. In fact, four geographical areas are referred to by Manu in II.17-25 each wider in scope than the former. First comes Brahmāvarta which lies between Sarasvatī and Dr̥ṣadvatī (difficult to identify precisely on account of change in course of rivers);²³ next comes Brahmar̥ṣi(deśa) which includes the neighbouring regions as shown on the map; then Madhyadeśa and finally Āryāvarta. It is the Brahmins (*agrajanman*) of the Brahmar̥ṣi region who are specifically charged with the universal mission. It was thus the Brahmins of the *second* region who were charged with the responsibility of disseminating “Hinduism” throughout the world.



Why, it must be asked, were the Brahmins of this region alone selected by Manu? The explanation lies in the historical circumstances of the times. The regions to the west and north of this area had been overrun by foreign invaders such as the Indo-Greeks, the Kuṣāṇas and the Śakas etc. from the second century B.C.E. onwards. Similarly, the region to the east and the south had

come under the influence of Buddhism. There is evidence from the Purāṇas to suggest that the Brahmins of these regions had become so closely associated with strictly non-orthodox practices²⁴ that they could not be relied upon to champion Hinduism, in the time of Manu (2nd century). We will see later that the situation had changed by the time of Śaṅkara (9th century).

But even in relation to the Brahmins selected for missionary enterprise from this geographical region certain questions arise: Brahmins residing in a particular part of India, who are themselves defined in caste-specific terms, are charged with a universal mission. Moreover, the region they hail from is considered as normative in terms of the *varṇa* system, into which one can only be born (X.5). These then are the horns of the dilemma; the topmost members of the *varṇa* system are being called upon to use a birth-ascribed norm as a universalizing agent. How is this possible?

VI

The answer is provided by verses X.43-44 of *Manusmṛti*, wherein Manu mentions many Kṣatriya tribes which fell from grace as a result of neglecting Vedic usages and specifies them as follows:

43. But in consequence of the omission of the sacred rites, and of their not consulting Brāhmaṇas, the following tribes of Kṣatriyas have gradually sunk in this world to the condition of Śūdras;

44. (Viz.) the Pauṇḍrakas, the Koḍas, the Draviḍas, the Kambojas, the Yavanas, the Śakas, the Pāradas, the Pahlavas, the Cīnas, the Kirātas, and the Daradas.²⁵

One can see that many tribes inhabiting the borders of India have been included here in the list as “fallen Kṣatriyas”, including the Chinese. The point needs to be elaborated. The tribes listed by Manu in X.44 could either be illustrative or exhaustive. Historical and commentarial evidence suggests that the list is illustrative. The word *bahiḥ* (outside) in the next verse could either mean (1) now excluded or (2) excluded *ab initio*. J. Muir has clearly shown on textual grounds that the former sense is meant.²⁶ He cites several passages from the *Mahābhārata* to show “that the Brahmins of that age regarded the Dasyus as owing allegiance to Brahmanical

institutions’’²⁷ which clearly explains why Manu would declare that all the people of the world have to be missionized by the Brahmins. In other words, the world is divided among the Aryans and the Dasyus, the Aryans already owe allegiance to Brahmanical institutions and now the rest of the world, represented by the Dasyus, should do the same. The Dasyus constitute even a broader category compared to the *mlecchas* (*Manusmṛti* X.45).

One of the terms by which people who neglect Vedic usages are known is *vrātya*. The process of becoming a *vrātya* is described in *Manusmṛti* II.38-40:

38. The (time for the) Sāvitrī (initiation) of a Brāhmaṇa does not pass until the completion of the sixteenth year (after conception), of a Kṣatriya until the completion of the twenty-fourth.

39. After those (periods men of) these three (castes) who have not received the sacrament at the proper time, become Vrātyas (outcasts), excluded from the Sāvitrī (initiation) and despised by the Āryans.

40. With such men, if they have not been purified according to the rule, let no Brāhmaṇa ever, even in times of distress, form a connection either through the Veda or by marriage.²⁸

Verse 40 bars contact with them if “*they have not been purified according to the rule*”. The rule involved here was apparently the *vrātyastoma* referred to in the *Tāndyabrāhmaṇa* (Chapter XVII) in Vedic times. By the time of Manu living as a *vrātya* (XI.63; also see XI.57; 60 and 66) had become *upapātaka* or a minor offence for which due penance was prescribed (XI.125); even when it involved loss of caste (*jātibhramśa*). It seems then that one of the duties of the Brahmins was to perform this rite by which people were brought within the pale of Hinduism.²⁹ *Manusmṛti* (X.22) actually describes the *descendants* of the Vrātya or apostate Kṣatriyas: “From the Vrātya of the Kṣatriya (caste) the Jhalla, the Malla, the Licchivi, the Naṭa, the Karaṇa, the Khasa and the Draviḍa”, *as well as* the descendants of apostate Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas.³⁰

It is clear, therefore, that a missionary ideology underlies the *Manusmṛti* which can be uncovered and which helps resolve the dilemma of how a *varṇa*-oriented society could also be expansionist. According to this view, virtually people all over the world, including the *mlecchas* (II.23), that is foreigners inhabiting the rest of the world, through the convenient fiction of being ‘lapsed Hindus’, were candidates for conversion. This view regarded *mlec-*

chas as degraded Kṣatriyas (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: II.4.3.48: *mlecchatām yayuh*).

It is quite possible that Manu's model represented a Brahmanical response to the success of Buddhism as a missionary religion. Brahmins could perform rites of social purification and could marry, unlike the Buddhist monks and so the strategies the Brahmin elite could think of would have to correspond to these facts.

VII

The question arises: did this in fact ever happen? Did the Brahmins of this region go forth and missionize?

One must first get a clear fix on the region itself. In order to do this one must go right back to the period of Aryan settlement in India. A critical phase in this settlement was the Battle of the Ten Kings which is alluded to in *R̥gVeda* VII.33 and placed by Geldner in an early period. The overall situation in relation to the tribes of the *R̥gVeda*, their settlement and the battle may be summarized as follows: "The whole of the territory known to the Vedic settlers was divided into a number of tribal principalities ruled normally by kings. The *Daśarājñā* or the battle of the ten kings is an important historical event alluded to in various hymns of the *R̥gVeda*, and as many of the important tribes and personalities figured in this famous battle, it is worth while outlining the conflict. *Sudās was a Bharata king of the Tritsu family which was settled in the country which later came to be known as Brahmāvarta*. At first Viśvāmitra, a scion of the Kuśika family of the Bharatas, was the priest of Sudās, and led him to victorious campaigns on the Vipāś and Śutudri. *Viśvāmitra, however, was dismissed later by Sudās, who appointed Vasishtha as his priest, probably on account of the superior Brahmanical knowledge of the Vasishthas*".³¹

It is clear from this passage that one is dealing with the same region referred to by Manu, and in Vasiṣṭha we are dealing not merely with a Brāhmaṇa but a *purohita*, the royal priest of Sudās to whom the whole of Book VII of the *R̥gVeda* is ascribed. So both the qualifications laid down by Manu are fulfilled: (1) that the missionaries be Brahmins who (2) hail from Braharṣi-deśa.

Vasiṣṭha married Arundhatī and had many sons. One of the well-known sons was Kuṇḍina (*Vāyu Purāṇa*: 70:80-90; *Matsya Purāṇa*: 145: 109-111). If we have read Manu right then it was these Brahmins who were charged with the mission to go forth in the world. The descendants of Kuṇḍina would be called *Kauṇḍinya* (Pāṇini 4.1.105). The movement of these Brahmins, descendants of Kuṇḍina, must now be traced through the familiar institutions of *gotra* and *pravara* among the Brāhmaṇas. “Brāhmaṇas of the Kauṇḍinya *Gotra* are mentioned in an inscription in Mysore, belonging probably to the second century A.D.”³² However, Chinese variants of the name Kauṇḍinya appear in Chinese texts connected with the region called Fu-nan in southeast Asia, with the implication of local intermarriage. It is remarkable that two phases in the process of Hinduization can be distinguished on the basis of the Chinese records, one in the first and another in the fourth century and a Kauṇḍinya is associated with *both* of these phases. One may now refer to the *first* Kauṇḍinya, about whom “one popular Chinese legend states that in the first century A.D., a Brahmin helped found a Fu-nan kingdom. A more reliable Chinese source of the second century A.D. notes that by this time the social and political structure of Fu-nan closely resembled a Hindu Kingdom of India”.³³ These two sentences read like a historical commentary on Manu II.20 and Manu II.18 respectively. A fuller account of subsequent development in this context refers to a second Kauṇḍinya:

Towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D. the throne of Fu-nan was occupied by Kiao-chen-ju or Kauṇḍinya. The *History of the Liang Dynasty* has preserved the following story about him: “Kauṇḍinya was a Brahman and an inhabitant of India. One day he heard a supernatural voice asking him to go and reign in Fu-nan. He reached Pan-pan to the south of Funan. The people of Fu-nan cordially welcomed him and elected him king. He introduced Indian laws, manners and customs.”³⁴

But Manu has also been associated with inflexibility in matters of marriage so how are the matrimonial alliances to be explained? A study of the rules of intercaste marriage in Manu also reveal a feature which has virtually gone unnoticed. The text reveals a concern both with *purity* and with *purification*. Scholars have focused on the former (*Manusmṛiti* X.5) and overlooked two salient facts: (1)

that a Brāhmaṇa could marry women from the four *varṇas* (III.13) and although marrying a *śūdra* woman is reprobated immediately, presumably in an Indian context (III.14-19), marriage of the *anuloma* type could raise the status of the offspring of a caste (*jāti*) “within the seventh generation” (X.64), a phenomenon more generally known as Jātyapkarṣa;³⁵ and (2) the accounts of the marriage of Kauṇḍinya with the female sovereign now take on a new meaning³⁶ not to speak of other matrimonial alliances,³⁷ as the relationships between Brāhmaṇas and non-Aryan women are explicitly referred to (X.66).

But still the question persists: How could the aboriginal people of a distant land be considered to be within the pale of the *varṇa* system for such marriages to take place? The name *kirāta* is typically applied to such people, especially those living in the north-eastern India in mountain caves (*Vājasaneyī Samhitā* XXX.16). The *Vāyu Purāṇa* (II.3) identifies them as a barbarous people living to the east of India. But the question remains: How could they be brought within the pale of the *varṇa* system? The answer is provided by verses X.43-44 of *Manusmṛti*, wherein Manu mentions the Kirātas among the Kṣatriya tribes which fell from grace as a result of neglecting Vedic usages. There is clear evidence of “fallen Kṣatriyas” who are mentioned along with the Kirātas being accepted within the Hindu fold in India.³⁸ A much more direct and far less convoluted answer is also possible. The text in Manu explicitly refers to the mission of the Brahmins as extending to *all* human beings (*sarvamānavāḥ*) and marriage of Brahmins to excluded races is alluded to in *Manusmṛti* X.28. It is not even necessary to bring the women involved within the pale of *varṇa* through pious fiction.

It is conceivable that the application of the model outside India in the distant East may have been suggested first by the partial and then full restoration of Hindu rule over northern India (by the time of Harṣa), an analogy which could be intuitively extended beyond India and is explicitly extended by Medhātithi in his commentary on Manu II.23, as pointed out by Kane: “If a kṣatriya king of excellent conduct were to conquer the Mlecchas, establish the system of four *varṇas* (in the Mleccha country) and assign to Mlecchas a position similar to that of caṇḍālas in Āryāvarta, even that

(Mleccha) country would be fit for the performance of sacrifices, since the earth is not by itself impure, but becomes impure through contact (of impure persons or things).’’³⁹

It also appears that Manu’s model was later broadened to include all Brahmins as potential missionaries. At least by the time Śaṅkara, when he wrote his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, the shift had clearly occurred and must have been a fact of life for him to refer to it without any reservations. The fact that Śaṅkara extends to all Brahmins the role reserved for those of Brahmar-ṣiḍeśa in Manu may have to do with the difference between the India of the time of Manu (2nd Century) and that of Śaṅkara (9th Century). In his commentary on *Vedāntasūtra*, I.3.33, Śaṅkara hypothesized that although the system of *varṇa* and *āśrama* in his time was in disarray, it must have been a fact of life in an earlier age otherwise the scriptural provisions would be meaningless.⁴⁰ It seems that while in Manu’s time all Brahmins could not be relied upon to spread “Hinduism” because many had become indistinguishable from Buddhists,⁴¹ no such fears obtained in Śaṅkara’s time and the mandate could be extended to all.

VIII

In his Introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* (Sastry 1985:4) Śaṅkara enunciated the basic mode of the diffusion of Hindu religion and culture. He explains why God, as Kṛṣṇa, decided to preach the supreme truth through the *Gītā*:

Though he has no end to serve, out of a desire to show his grace (*bhūtānugraha-jigṛkṣayā*), he taught the twofold dharma contained in the Veda once again to Arjuna, and through him to the whole world. Śaṅkara says that God chose Arjuna to impart his teaching, because Arjuna was in need of it, being immersed in sorrow and delusion, and because he was a good man; and the dharma accepted and practised by good men will eventually be accepted by all.⁴²

These good men were represented by the communities who practised *varṇāśrama dharma* under the leadership of the Brāhmaṇas. According to Śaṅkara the Brāhmaṇa model is primary. Even God incarnated himself for the sake of protecting “earthly Brahman”, a term explained by Nīlakaṇṭha to mean “The Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and Yajñas, or sacrifices.”⁴³ Moreover, Śaṅkara goes

on to say that it is through the preservation of *brāhmaṇatva* that “the Vedic religion could be preserved since thereon depend all distinctions of caste and religious order.”⁴⁴ Sastry interprets the term *brāhmaṇatva* as ‘spiritual life’ and while this is certainly a valid, if lofty, interpretation, the context is so clearly one of *varṇāśramadharmā* that the word *brāhmaṇatva* could easily and perhaps does refer to the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*. As Ānandagiri explains “kṣatriyas and others require the help of the brāhmaṇas, the spiritual class, in the performance of the sacred rites and in the study of the Scriptures.”⁴⁵

In order to perceive the relevance and significance of these remarks the history of the Hinduization of the region—a thread relinquished earlier—must now be picked up. After Combodia replaced Fu-nan in dominance in the seventh century, Manu’s model can be again seen in operation in Kambuja. When Jayavarman II became King of Combodia in 802 C.E. he invited a Brāhmaṇa named Hiraṇyadama from Janapada (probably in India). “Hiraṇyadama instituted the cult of *devarāja* and initiated *śivakaivalya*, the royal *guru*, into the rituals of this worship to become religiously independent of Java. The royal priesthood lasted for 250 years as evidenced by an inscription of 1052 A.D.”⁴⁶ A verse from *Manusmṛti* is cited in an inscription about *two centuries ago*⁴⁷ and there is evidence that the preceptor of Indravarman of Kambuja, Śivasoma by name, was a pupil of the famous Śaṅkarācārya,⁴⁸ who, as we saw earlier, espouses Manu’s model in his Introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*.

IX

It is clear, therefore, that what Larus calls the Brahman hypothesis did not operate by default. The most authoritative legal text of classical Hinduism, the *Manusmṛti*, clearly charges the Brāhmaṇas of a particular region with the task of missionizing the world, a role which other Brahmanas also adopted. Furthermore, it also devised an appropriate myth and ritual for such expansion as well as an appropriate sociology and pressed the most fundamental social institution of humanity—that of marriage—into service as well. That this Brāhmaṇa model was not merely a theoretical con-

struct but an operational reality is established by facts garnered from historical and epigraphic records of the history of Combodia, and is supported by similar records from other parts of southeast Asia.⁴⁹

The conclusion of this paper, as presented above, requires both clarification and amplification. The conclusion contains two components; one ideological and the other historical. The historical evidence of the spread of Hinduism to southeast Asia is too patent to be called in question. The point which readers may find more difficult to accept is the claim that Hinduism also contains an ideology for missionary activity, as distinguished from the history of its actual expansion. If one wants to *reject* the evidence of the ideology adduced here and yet wishes to *accept* the fact of widespread and undeniable evidence of Hindu beliefs and practises in southeast Asia, then the only possible explanation of such presence is Hindu migration alone, without involving the conversion to Hinduism by the local population. There can be no doubt that Hindu migration was involved, but this does not negate the fact of conversion to Hinduism for the simple reason that, for instance, "Among the many administrative reforms taken up by Kaundinya I, was the introduction of Sanskrit and [the] alphabet of North Indian origin" among "the people of Fu-nan".⁵⁰ The *people* existed prior to the arrival of the *individual* Kaundinya and according to the Chinese accounts *they* elected him king.⁵¹ Even if this were not the case great caution is required in the matter. Most of the population of North America, for instance, is the result of European migration and is Christian. Are we then to conclude that Christianity is *not* a missionary religion? It is because we do not question the fact that Christianity is a missionary religion *to begin with* that we do not draw such an erroneous conclusion. At this stage another counter-argument against the thesis of the paper could be adduced—that the really missionary religion to emerge out of India is not Hinduism but Buddhism. There is little doubt that Buddhism was far more successful as a missionary religion than Hinduism.⁵² However, two religions can both be missionary and yet one can be far more successful than the other. This cannot be taken to mean that the less successful religion is not missionary, only that it is less successful as such. For instance, "In some areas where Islam and

Christianity are competing for converts, Islam is gaining at a rate of ten to one.”⁵³ Are we to conclude from this that Islam is a missionary religion and Christianity not so? Thus there can be little doubt that ancient Hinduism was *ideologically as well as historically* a missionary religion.

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¹ Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963) p. 163; Ainslie T. Embree, ed., *Alberuni's India, Translated by Edward C. Sachau* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1971) p. 20, 100, 163; Percival Spear, *India: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1972) p. 41; Pratima Bowes, *The Hindu Religious Tradition: A Philosophical Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977) p. 129, note 7; etc.

² Louis Renou, ed., *Hinduism* (New York: George Braziller, 1962) p. 16, 48; Joel Larus, *Culture and Political-Military Behaviour: The Hindus in Pre-Modern India* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1979) p. 172 ff., G. Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (ed. Walter F. Vella) (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968) *passim*.

³ Joel Larus, *op. cit.*, p. 173; R.C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963) p. 8-9; Dawee Daweewarn, *Brahmanism in South-East Asia (From the Earliest Times to 1445 A.D.)* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1982) p. 198 ff.

⁴ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1954) p. vii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127, 145-146. Also see P.K. Gode and C.G. Karve, eds., *Prin. Vaman Shivram Apte's The Practical Sanskrit—English Dictionary* (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1958) Vol. II, p. 1296.

⁶ Joel Larus, *op. cit.*, p. 180, 181.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 181-182.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹² A.L. Basham, *Studies in Indian History and Culture* (Calcutta: Sambodhi Publications Private Ltd., 1964) p. 149.

¹³ Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit—English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) p. 1282.

¹⁴ The use of the word Hindu here is anachronistic but seems to be more appropriate than any other such as Aryan, Vaidika, Sanātana etc. which may be suggested, as their semantic field has varied over time in such a way as to render them misleading.

- ¹⁵ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1968) Vol. I, Part I, p. 306.
- ¹⁶ Mahesh Kumar Sharan, *Studies in Sanskrit Inscriptions of Ancient Combodia* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1974) p. 165; R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- ¹⁷ Louis Renou, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁸ Percival Spear, ed., *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958) p. 70.
- ¹⁹ G. Bühler, tr., *The Laws of Manu* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) p. 411.
- ²⁰ J. Śāstrī, ed., *Manusmṛti* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) p. 411.
- ²¹ G. Bühler, tr., *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.
- ²² Ludwik Sternbach, *The Mānava Dharmaśāstra I-III and the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (Varanasi: All India Kashi Raj Trust, 1974) p. 12.
- ²³ See Percival Spear, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 42, note 1.
- ²⁴ H.H. Wilson, tr., *The Vishṇu Purāṇa* (Calcutta: Punthi Pastak, 1961: first published: London, 1840) pp. 267-268.
- ²⁵ G. Bühler, tr., *op. cit.*, p. 412. Also see D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Society and Administration of Ancient and Medieval India* (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967) Vol. I, p. 49.
- ²⁶ J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972 reprint) Pt. I, p. 483.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 484.
- ²⁸ G. Bühler, tr., *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.
- ²⁹ It seems one of the reasons why this point has hitherto been overlooked is due to the fact that *Manusmṛti* is more explicit about negative provisions or statements relating to the *vṛātyas* (see *Manusmṛti* II.39(d); VIII.373; X.20-23; XI.63 and 198). These have held the attention of scholars, leading them to overlook *naitairapūṭair vidhivat* in II.40(a). It is glossed by Kullūka as *yathāvidhiprāyaścittam* (Śāstrī, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 39). The actual penance involved is described in *Manusmṛti* XI.212 and 213. At this point a question might arise: How is the *varṇa* of a *vṛātya* to be determined if *vārnika* identity has been lost due to prolonged exclusion. Such exclusion is a common factor in all the three categories of (1) *vṛātya* (2) *mleccha* and (3) *dasyu* vide *Manusmṛti* II.23 and 39; X.20 and 45, each implying a progressively greater measure of deviation from the original *varṇa*. The answer is provided by *Manusmṛti* (X.57) namely, that when *varṇa* cannot be determined by birth, as in this case, it should be determined on the basis of actions.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 406-407.
- ³¹ A.D. Pusalkar, "Aryan Settlements in India" in R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Vedic Age* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965) p. 248, emphasis added.
- ³² R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
- ³³ Joel Larus, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- ³⁴ R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
- ³⁵ P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 61, 63.
- ³⁶ R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
- ³⁷ Mahesh Kumar Sharan, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- ³⁸ D.C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, Chapter III.
- ³⁹ P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- ⁴¹ H.H. Wilson, tr., *op. cit.*, pp. 267-268.
- ⁴² K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959) p. 8, emphasis added.

⁴³ Alladi Mahadeva Sastry, tr., *The Bhagavadgītā with the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* (Madras: Samata Books, 1985) p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964) p. 443.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

⁴⁸ "It is stated in a contemporary record that he learnt the Śāstras (sacred scriptures) from Bhagavat Śaṅkara, who is undoubtedly the famous Śaṅkarācārya" (*ibid.*, p. 438). Also see K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar* (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1976) p. 428; Mahesh Kumar Sharan, *op. cit.*, p. 284; etc.

⁴⁹ R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1968) p. 655; R. C. Majumdar, ed., *The Classical Age* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970) pp. 652-653; R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964), p. 418, 420, 425; Vijay Shankar Shrivastava, *Hinduism in South-East Asia* (Delhi: Ramanand Vidya Bhavan, 1939); Dawee Daweewarn, *op. cit.*, *passim*; etc.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁵¹ R.C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵² Even here there are some interesting exceptions. Fā-hien describes Java (circa 414 C.E.) as a place "where various forms of error and Brahmanism are flourishing, while Buddhism in it is not worth speaking of" (James Legge, tr., *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* [New York: Dover Publications, 1965; first published by Clarendon Press, Oxford in 1886] p. 113). The text is cited as "Heretic Brahmins flourish there, and Buddha-dharma hardly deserves mentioning" by J. Takakusu, tr., *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695)* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966; originally published in 1896 by the Clarendon Press, London) p. xlviii. Some scholars distinguish between heresy and Brāhmanism, see Dawee Daweewarn, *op. cit.*, p. 264. I-Tsing's account includes evidence about people who "seem to have embraced Buddhism for some time; and there are several points which show that they were of Hindoo origin" (*ibid.*, p. xlv).

⁵³ Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958) p. 223.

PROTECTING STRANGERS: ESTABLISHING A FUNDAMENTAL VALUE IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ANCIENT GREECE

CHRISTOPH AUFFARTH *

Dedicated to Leonore & Ulrich Siegele-Wenschkewitz

Summary

(1) In the current discussions about the rights of asylum on one hand there is urgency for decisions and actions of the politicians, on the other hand these actions must not erode the human right of asylum. It is not a question of the quantity of applicants but of the quality of their rights. Religionists are asked for the foundation of the rights of strangers, because the roots of these rights reach into the archaic past, when there was not yet a state with institutionalized laws ("Rechtsstaat"). The treatment of the stranger was both in (2) Ancient Israel and (3) Ancient Greece the test of the righteousness of the people. Not the exact and continuing performance of the cult of the Gods demonstrates the piety of the people, but the treatment of the poor and weak. In pre-state societies the right of the strongest does not rule. However, the pride of the citizens and the token of the richness of a city is the granting of protection to outcasts. The sacrality of the holy place ("sanctuary") does not automatically grant protection. The talk of divine protection enables the protectors to gain the advantage of wide acceptance which compensates for a deficit of actual power.

(4) Human rights have to be defended against attempts of political administrations to cut them short, that is, in consequence: to take away an individual's right to enjoy asylum.

1. Asylum as a Test of the Founding of Human Rights

1.1 The right of asylum is more important today than ever before. There are at least 15 million refugees in the world today (not counting so-called economic refugees, like "boat-peoples" or "Scheinasylanten"). The economic power of the northern, industrialized nations stifles the economies of the southern nations. Furthermore, people of the Third World are terrorized and restrained by advanced weapons, eagerly proffered by the North to solvent tyrants. Consequently, the rights of asylum have gained compelling actuality today.

We must review the justification of these rights particularly when the affluent nations curtail the general validity and the generosity of the right of asylum through extraordinary legal measures and close their borders to those seeking protection. Germany (to speak only of her) today increasingly rejects asylum applications. Although, to avoid charges of inhumanity, Germany does not deport the rejected applicants. This exposes the dilemma between the legality and the legitimacy of human rights.

1.2 Like other human rights, rights of asylum stem not from positive state rights. They protect the individual against prerogatives nations have claimed for themselves. Therefore, human rights are inalienable (that means, men possess them like they possess their life) and must not be curtailed.¹

The rights of asylum belong not to those individual rights won through political emancipation, but belong to social human rights.² Surprisingly, they were recognized for the first time as basic rights in 1948 by the United Nations. However, even in the non-binding Charter of the United Nations asylum is not considered a human right. By a slight change of wording the human rights of asylum, which the political persecuted possess, were transformed into rights that can be granted by nations.³

The German constitutional law (Grundgesetz) however in Article 16 Paragraph 2 (2) grants the right of asylum to everybody who is persecuted for political reasons. It states: “Politisch Verfolgte genießen Asylrecht”.⁴ This far-reaching formulation was motivated by the experiences of the mothers and fathers of constitutional law because many of them had enjoyed protection from Nazi tyranny themselves.⁵ In this respect asylum rights are utilitarian. It was then even more utilitarian because in the recent past Jews applying for asylum in Switzerland had been rejected because courts determined that they were persecuted not for political reasons, but were simply looking for protection from their murderers who had acted out of racist or religious reasons.⁶ To put it pointedly the rights of asylum are conceived as rights granted by politicians to other politicians.⁷

The human rights of the French Revolution did not include a right of asylum, because this right was a claim of the feudal powers,

which excluded some people from general and universal justice. By immunity specific people were secure in ecclesiastical spaces where secular powers did not extend.⁸ It was unnecessary to distinguish separate rights for dissenters in the United States because America itself was in fact an asylum for all those who could or would not obey secular powers of absolutistic European states.⁹ In Europe, the right of asylum was, however, an urgent necessity, since the *volonté generale* was defined by exclusively one person and the revolution was transformed into a reign of terror (the *terreur*). On one side, asylum was touted as a political attraction for exiled peers. The other side attracted exiled *citoyens*. It turned out not to be a human right, because it was valid only beyond the borders.

In this case the discussions, if human rights originated in the age of Enlightenment¹⁰ or if they had non-secular origins in the age of reformation,¹¹ miss the point: asylum rights follow an archaic, pre-Christian and pre-state tradition. Both of the mentioned theories take pride in the advance of justice,¹² but, when considering rights of asylum, there is really no justification for a belief in progressive development of law.

1.3 The Sanctuary movement in the United States justified its illegal actions by appealing to the biblical institution of asylum and the right of the church to grant asylum at the altar (sanctuary), whenever political refugees from Central America were hidden and moved from church to church.¹³ The older stage in the evolution of the asylum law seemed to have survived, but now gains new importance. Religionists have often explained (and some continue to do so) the significance of an altar as safe refuge for those seeking asylum through its capacity for radiating sacral power.¹⁴ Is Otto Kimminich right when he conceived a sacral-magic stage of asylum¹⁵ which had been superseded by an utilitarian and then a legal stage?¹⁶

Another current model of rights of strangers imputes that pre-state societies perceived strangers as hostile, who not only could be but must be killed. However, an exception of this general rule is the guest and friend. He is honoured to such an extent that the host may even surrender his wife for the night. Pre-state societies were, as it is maintained, essentially xenophobic or even racist. This

model is widely accepted among (German) historians following Carl Schmitt, who regarded the dichotomy of friend/enemy as the substance of politics and war and as the only case that all politics is aiming at: the serious case (Ernstfall). This dichotomy is especially fatal in the case of asylum for here one claims a right not in favor of friends or native, but for strangers, i.e. enemies.¹⁷

In opposition to such undemocratic explanations and regarding the historical and contemporary claims of human rights, I shall undertake an investigation of asylum and its function in pre-state societies and early civilizations in Israel and Greece.

2. Protecting Strangers in Israel

2.1. Abraham and the Destruction of Sodom

In the book of Genesis one reads the stirring story of Abraham trying to save the city of Sodom and his beseeching God to spare the city because of the righteous.¹⁸ However, even the smallest number he could imagine was set too high. In Sodom, one could not even find ten righteous people. God had only tested their morals. The test was not whether or not they committed thievery, deceived one another, mistreated their wives and their servants or committed murder. He was not even concerned if they were devout and fulfilled their religious duties. Hospitality toward strangers was the true test. Three strangers first visit Abraham, the nomad,¹⁹ who receives them with utmost kindness. In return the three strangers assure the couple, who are now old and sterile, that they will soon receive a child. Leaving Abraham, the three continue on their way. Arriving in the town they are invited or, indeed, compelled by Lot, the nephew of Abraham, to accept his hospitality in his home. Shortly, a group of townsmen form in front of Lot's house and threateningly demand to see the guests, implying that they desire sexual intercourse with them. Lot refuses to turn over the strangers. Indeed he offers his unmarried daughters to the group. He implores the men of Sodom to leave his three guests in peace (Gen. 19, 8): "since that is the reason why they came under the protection of my roof".²⁰ A small punishing miracle saves the

guests. God destroys the world of the Sodomites while sparing the few righteous because the townsmen betrayed the laws of hospitality and mistreated guests.

Indeed, this account may be just an anecdote, one may call it an itinerant story,²¹ which was woven into tales about the patriarchs. Later, in the time of the Jewish exile,²² it was once again revised. Then it explained, how the catastrophe of the Jewish exile could have happened in spite of the righteous people among the exiled. This tale is, however, grounded in reality: Although I don't mean, as the Rabbis like to relate, that Abraham built a hotel aside the road for the numerous guests, who had heard of his hospitality (thereby founding Israeli tourism).²³ The narrative deals with a social problem, namely, the protection of strangers. Whereas in olden times towns flourished which disregarded the laws of hospitality, there exists now only lifeless desert where salt prevents the growth of vegetation and the Dead Sea extends over the rest.²⁴ The etiology confirms the message of the story. This message represents one of the few early ethical commandments directly connected with the cult of Gods.²⁵ Whoever honors the Gods in cult has also to care for strangers and the impoverished. Gods are not believed to be identical with their cult-images. Instead they are anthropomorphic and cannot be distinguished in principle from human beings.²⁶ Disguised as the disadvantaged of society, the Gods test the piety of those who claim to honor them. The laws of hospitality can be respected only by the host.²⁷ There is no utilitarian reason for this, there is no sacral object that radiates or symbolizes divine power. The world of the Sodomites was destroyed through their unethical actions. Their behavior is the social chaos; the natural Chaos is therefore only the inevitable consequence of the former. The actions of God were not arbitrary (anger of an offended God). God establishes in nature what men had established in their social world: disorder and Chaos.²⁸ Conversely, as the prophets of the exile expressed, a nation can "turn back" to justice, thus enabling a new creation: Ezekiel envisions in his utopia or plan for a constitution (47, 8-12) how the fresh water river rises from the Jerusalem temple. It transforms the Dead Sea into a lush oasis.²⁹

The concrete determinations of law repeatedly contain special

regulations for protecting strangers.³⁰ They do not begin in time of exile, which could be inferred from the conditions of a pariah-class. The statement "... you had been strangers in Egypt" is not utilitarian in the sense of the Golden Rule (we could face the same situation ourselves). This statement is found in the oldest collection of laws in Israel, in the "book of Covenant" (Ex 22, 20), which reflects a world of free and sedentary peasant communities.³¹ Moreover it grounds the protection of the stranger with a deed that God performed first. This is the same form as in a prayer in which one begs: "Help me, because I experienced your help already!"

2.2 Fleeing to God's Protection: Is there a Sacral-Magic Asylum in Israel?

Establishing kingship in Israel quickly concentrated economic power; thereby increasing the temptation to disregard the rights of the disadvantaged. The kings secured, like their neighbor kings, royal privilege by sacralizing their power.³² Resisting these attempts, Yahweh's authority and power provide rectification.³³ Nathan conveys the word of God, which discloses the adultery and the secret murder of King David (2 Sam 11). King David spontaneously repents. Elijah succeeds by the word of God in revising the murder conviction—which after a regular court proceeding according to the principles of the laws of state carried a death-sentence—by obtaining the public repentance of the king (1 Kings 21). These are two instances of how older pre-state regulations of justice could be asserted against the rights of the more powerful and even the force of kings.³⁴ The classic prophets repeatedly call upon the name of Yahweh for protecting the helpless.³⁵ Also, the collections of laws, as the book of Covenant, attest to an administration of justice from within the communities, not influenced by the king's power.³⁶ Any claims about the violation of rights have to be reported and scheduled for a public debate. Then the claims must be asserted in the debate. The control of public and the rule of just proportion, known as the rule of talion (i.e. only one tooth can be demanded for one tooth) prevent private justice from slipping into private revenge or plundering. There is no public punishment because there is no central power of the state. Especially significant is the administration concerning cases of violent death.³⁷ To avoid

death himself the man who slaughtered another man must escape to an asylum. In this case the altar is explicitly mentioned. If the sanctuary is reached, then the accused is safe from an immediate execution by private justice.³⁸ If the accused can prove that he killed without malice, then the asylum can protect him from being executed.

Two arguments can be made against the view that it is the sacral power of the altar that protects strangers (as a rule one looks for asylum in a foreign city):³⁹ The first argument sees an exception in the regulations of the book of Covenant: He who stands as killing with deceptive malice (be^carmah) can be pulled away from the altar and can be executed (Ex 21, 14).⁴⁰ Acting with deceptive malice transgresses a ground rule of pre-state societies: Struggles between equals in public are allowed, but advantages cannot be gained through secrecy and deception.⁴¹ This regulation has nothing to do with the sacredness of the altar.

The second argument is based on the institution of the city-asylum. Besides the asylum in the Jerusalem temple, which is mentioned many times in the Psalms,⁴² the Torah provides several cities equally distributed through the country that also offer protection to refugees. In this case not sacredness but the accessibility of the asylum is the criterion.⁴³ Let us review the facts: Not every altar can grant asylum. Cities must be specially determined in order to be asylums. Asylum does not protect everyone. These observations support the thesis that asylum is a positive right, and not a sacral-magic power. The asylum functions of an altar can be perceived in an analogy to the protection of a stranger in a house.⁴⁴ A comparison with ancient Greece corroborates this conclusion.

3. Protecting the Stranger in Archaic Greece

3.1 Odysseus and Theoklymenos

In early Greece one finds the itinerant legend of the disguised Gods, who test the morals of the people by observing how they treat strangers. That is actually a recurrent theme in the *Odyssey*. However, it is not just a literary motif of an Oriental story. Significantly, the motif (that those who are received with hospitality

are Gods) does not culminate in its cultic conclusion.⁴⁵ There are disguised Gods in the *Odyssey*, to whom, however, this motif is not applied.⁴⁶ Instead, the tests of justice include the widow Penelope, the orphan Telemachos, the wandering beggar Odysseus. Their treatment divides the righteous, like the old servant and swineherd Eumaios, from the sacrilegious. It is not a cultic transgression that makes the sacrilegious (σχετλίοι), but their mistreatment of these strangers.⁴⁷

In addition to the beggar, this is exemplified by a refugee who killed another man unintentionally. He, the seer Theoklymenos, flees to the protection of Telemachos,⁴⁸ but thereby on the island of Ithaca he falls into the hands of the suitors, who cruelly insult him and harm him, like they harm his protector himself. Before he leaves the house finally, he has a vision of the impending downfall of the suitors in a cosmic catastrophe.⁴⁹

To protect the stranger was an acute necessity in Early Greece: Overnight wealthy shipowners and merchants could become beggars through shipwreck. This fate is exemplified by Odysseus during his wanderings. Several times he loses all his wealth and his ships. Having lost even the last of his clothes he drifts ashore on the island of the Phaeacians. Since they are proverbial xenophobics,⁵⁰ he is in great danger of being returned to the stormy winter seas. Through well-planned actions he succeeds in being received as a refugee and he enjoys their generous hospitality. In the palace of the king he sits down on the hearth. However, this is not what saved him, although this hearth maybe was the sacral center of the house. The deciding action is to embrace the knees (γουνάζειν) of the queen in the stereotyped gesture of the refugee (Hiketes). Thereby he comes under the protection of the woman of the house—women have the right to grant asylum in their own house.⁵¹ Consequently, he is received as a refugee by the entire community.

The exact opposite occurs in the cave of Polyphemos. It is explicitly stated that Odysseus set foot on the island to test the people.⁵² The giant turns out to be a cannibal. When Odysseus requests a token of hospitality for himself, the ogre answers cynically that his gift is that he will eat him last. The giant ignores the warning that Zeus, the protector of the refugees (ἰκέσιος),⁵³ will punish him. By a trick Odysseus succeeds in blinding the ogre and

escaping from the prison of the cave. The Cyclops, not being a barbarian, knew the law of hospitality—a right, that could be applied for all over the then known world—but almost being an animal, he ignored the right of a stranger: The poet ascribes this ignorance to his disregard of the Gods.

For our questions, the ending of the story is especially interesting: Odysseus conquered the Cyclops only through his own cunning without the help of a miracle or other action on the part of the Gods. Odysseus shouts to the Cyclops from safe distance that he was blinded as a punishment of Zeus *ἰκέσιος* for having disregarded the rights of hospitality.⁵⁴ Not until then does he reveal his true name. Thereby he turns cunning secrecy into the publicity of heroic fairness. Later, this brings him both glory and suffering.

Likewise, the punishment of the suitors is confirmed. Odysseus is victorious in spite of their superior strength without using trickery and without help. Penelope can understand that this must have been done by a God. Again, no God brought punishment, again only men were at work.⁵⁵ At the very end of the epic, the Odyssey tells about an intervention of God:⁵⁶ As the relatives of the suitors seeking revenge on Odysseus⁵⁷ who murdered their sons, a few men back up Odysseus by arguing that he wouldn't be able to kill all the suitors against the will of the Gods (444-446). His deed was justified by the sacrilege of the suitors (454-462). Most of those, who came for revenge, agree and return home. Only a few are not convinced. The spiral of vendetta threatens to continue. In this situation the Gods intervene. A struggle ensues, but only one, the father of the worst suitor, is killed. Suddenly Athena appears and demands an end to the shedding of blood. The enemies flee. This just incites Odysseus all the more and he charges after the men. What began as punishment now turns into revenge; Odysseus has violated the limit of justice. Before he can turn the punishment into murder, Zeus stops him with a thunderbolt. Then, after taking an oath, both parties promise to return to peace.⁵⁸

The case, when things get serious (*der Ernstfall*), is here the peace. The enemy is he who in spite of warnings⁵⁹ transgresses against the order agreed by all and he who harms the weaker members. The weak are exemplified by the strangers. They especially must be protected. If they come into the protection of a

family then they receive the status of a close relative (ἀντὶ κασιγνήτου).⁶⁰

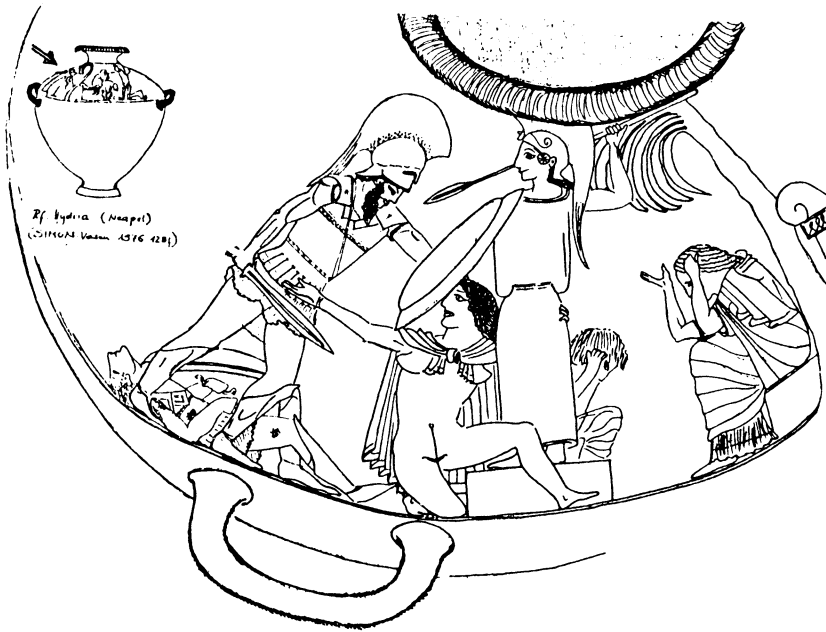
In this system of regulations of conflicts within communities there are no sacral-magic centers of power, that trouble the network of the equality of the heads of families, who voluntarily give up their claim of using force against the weaker ones, even less sacral kings. Punishment is executed by those who are injured by private justice under the eyes, that means controlled by the others in public, after the claims are put and discussed in public debate, then accepted by the majority. The ethical principles of this order are communicated by myths of the Gods.⁶¹

3.2 *Hikesia und Asylum: Becoming a Positive Right in States*

Up to now I have spoken about Hikesia, in the exact Greek term. Strangers were protected not by touching a sacred object or reaching a sacred place but only through the good will of a woman if in a home or of a man of the community if outside the home. The Gods are involved only when reasons for doing something are not by itself clear. I want to stress that before the institution of laws—that is, before their codification and the establishment of legal proceedings—norms of pre-state communities were regularly presented through narrative accounts. These stories claimed a right of strangers (that means a subject's human right) to be protected which transcended community boundaries.⁶² To say it pointedly, it is the system of bilateral treaties—in the following period of codified laws—in which the bounds of the validity of the laws were established, that creates regions of lawlessness, where the strangers are not protected.

Hikesia conforms to a psycho-biological ritual of bonding (Band-stiftung) when the Hiketes embraces the knees of the potential protector (γουνάζειν).⁶³ Here one should recall that in animal ethology ritual is a socially communicated code that has to be grounded and realized for each new situation. In humans this means that gestures are understood inter-culturally, but must be founded in terms specific to the culture.

Among the images from the conquest of Troy, the fate of Cassandra is frequently told.⁶⁴ Cassandra displays gestures of Hikesia to the image of Athena. Although the image of the Goddess is armed



Kassandra embracing the Palladion: Hydria of the Kleophrades-painter (Athens 480/475 B.C.) MN Napoli 2422 [Erika Simon: *Die griechischen Vasen* 1976, fig. 128]

and the spear is pointed to the aggressor, the gesture at the sacred center is not effective:⁶⁵ Ajax, swelled by victory and bloodthirsty, violates the priestess.

We enter the epoch of *asylia* with the Cassandra myth, in which the altar as place of asylum and the ritual procedure of eliminating pollution of impious deeds gain enormous importance. But even here human agreements are obviously more important than the location's sacredness.⁶⁶ In the formative phase of the *poleis* the temple plays a central function, where the citizens suspiciously maintain equal treatment among themselves. The temple stores a large amount of surpluses which results in greater economic equality. This wealth is proudly displayed in competition with other city-states.⁶⁷ Many cities are not yet (or will not be) fortified and the treasuries are scarcely protected.⁶⁸ If a citizen of a foreign polis is allowed to take compensation for a grievance, termed by the Greeks *σολᾶν*,⁶⁹ then the temple is the best place easily to find money. For

this reason attempts are made to exclude these treasuries from acts of private justice by pronouncing it ἄσυλον, “not allowed for private justice”.⁷⁰ This proclamation must be supported by bilateral treaties with other city-states. It is not a quality of the sanctuary as such. That is, there are many sanctuaries, which cannot provide asylum.⁷¹ The proclaimed asylum of a temple can be asserted by the stranger for himself by placing himself under the roof and protection of the deity.⁷²

3.3 Sanctions by Gods and Men who Violate Asylum:

The Case of the Lydian Paktyas Claiming Asylum for Himself

The case is briefly told: A Lydian named Paktyas is given a dangerous assignment by the Persian king, Kyros, to complete a war expedition. Scarcely is Kyros underway to another operation when Paktyas revolts.⁷³ He attempts to win the Lydians over to his side. But in vain. Fleeing from Kyros and his army the Lydian seeks refuge in the Greek city of Kyme.⁷⁴ Immediately the Persian king demands his extradition. The Kymeans have to choose between protecting a stranger who applied for asylum or to wage a war they are sure to lose against the king of kings. With this dilemma it seems best to put the question to an oracle. They consult an oracle nearby, the Branchidai oracle.⁷⁵ The answer is clear, surprisingly clear: Paktyas should be delivered back to the Persians! This seems a convenient solution. However, one citizen does not believe this and charges that the messengers have lied. A group of citizens including the critic again consult the oracle. The question is precisely formulated that a hiketes seeks refuge with them escaping a violent death. Once again the oracle returns the same answer: extradition. The still sceptical citizen challenges the answer.⁷⁶ He throws out the birds that have built nests in the oracular sanctuary. Then he hears a voice shouting—the oracle abandons his restrained behaviour—forbidding “the most blasphemous of all” not to drive away the hiketai of the oracle.⁷⁷ The citizen places the contrary question: “You protect those who seek asylum with you, but demand that we release the refuge?” The God replies: “Yes, I do. You should commit this sacrilege and then perish because of it, just so you don’t ever return asking if you should extradite a stranger.”

Herodotus enjoys conducting historical thought experiments.⁷⁸ Which is the case here, too. The Kymaeans do not extradite Pakytas. Instead they send him to a neighbouring island. These inhabitants plan on their turn to send him to the Persians. So the Kymaeans take him back and send him to another neighbouring city. Although he takes immediate refuge in the Athena temple, the protectress of the city,⁷⁹ they remove him by force and, to receive a large reward, they hand him over to the Persians. This blood-stained money is no advantage. The long chain of defeats for the Ionian cities now begins.⁸⁰

One may attribute to Herodotus' peculiar religiosity, that he saw in the mysterious events following the evil deeds of the blasphemous God's handiwork. However, as a model of explanation it was widely accepted. This can be shown with the affair of Kylon: Six generations or so after the event the Spartans at the onset of the Peloponnesian war still could demand the handing over of the descendants of the accused in order to eliminate the pollution by punishing them.⁸¹

4. Some Conclusions

In regard to the current discussions about the founding of asylum as a human right, I conclude with the following remarks.

(1) If jurists are to speak about the civilizing power and the evolution of rights creating a more human society then they must ignore the primitive and past societies. In a world and an age of refugees there is no place for optimism that evolution (or in political terms: convergence to democratic systems) will solve the problem.

(2) In primitive democracies there had been rights of strangers not only for the guest but also for refugees. They had to apply for protection by using conventional signs. These signs were understood and accepted everywhere. By codifying laws, regions were created where rights of strangers were not valid.

(3) There are no centers of sacral power in primitive society that punish or are believed to punish transgressors of justice automatically. God's punishment goes hand in hand with the punishment by men. The talk of divine protection enables the human protectors to gain the advantage of wide acceptance which

could compensate for a deficit of actual power. The right of asylum is nothing, if it is not carried through energetically by men.

(4) The rights of asylum in the primitive democracy of Israel and early Greece exist in context with its fundamental principle.⁸² This principle states that the strengths of a community are best measured both by wealth self-consciously exposed (e.g. in the temple buildings built by the community as a whole) and by just treatment of the weak and defenseless. The stories illustrate the necessity of these rules as thought experiments tracing the grave consequences of a violation of the rules. Asylum was a fundamental challenge to powerful members of its society to help those who had not the means to help themselves.

(5) There is no way back to personal, face-to-face societies or the stage preceding codification of laws. And there was no "brave old world" in past times. However, whoever gained economic power was required to support the weak by the system of *Leiturgia*. For our situation, I think, we could learn the following: asylum is not just a supplementary policy stemming from economic security. We, the rich, like to hide behind the paragraphs of the laws and point to others, who reject those applying for asylum. We cannot exploit the resources of the Third World getting rich by selling them weapons, but close our eyes and borders, when the exploited seek help. We live in One World.

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¹ Roman Schur (ed.): *Zur Geschichte der Erklärung der Menschenrechte* (WdF 11) Darmstadt 1964; Ludger Kuhnhardt: *Die Universalität der Menschenrechte*. München 1987.

² Cf. Ermacora (see note 3), 31 f.

³ The bill introduced on 28.6.1948 at the Commission of human rights of the United Nations formulated the human right of asylum in article 12 (citing the

english text): “Everyone has the right to seek and be granted, in other countries, asylum from prosecution.” What was there formulated as everybody’s right in every place (a subjective right), was altered in article 14 of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” on 10.12.1948. (a declaration, which moreover does not bind the signers in international law, cf. Felix Ermacora: *Menschenrechte in der sich wandelnden Welt*. Band 1: *Historische Entwicklung der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten* (SWAW-PH 297) Wien 1974, 532-571, here 541 f.) into a possibility of the particular states to grant asylum. This was achieved by changing “the right to seek and be granted” into “the right to seek and to enjoy”. “Das vermeintliche Menschenrecht wird zum Staatsrecht auf Asylgewährung”. For text and commentary see Hans Kreuzberg: *Grundrecht auf Asyl. Materialien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*. Köln [u.a.] 1948, 5-9, the quotation p. 6.

⁴ I apologize for considering especially German conditions and positions in this first part. I can see here the stage in full light (to let aside the dark corners). I could perceive only flashes about English or American conditions. In many contributions Otto Kimminich defends the evaluation of the asylum as a human right, the most complete and latest one: O.K.: Artikel 16. Lieferung 49 of the *Drittbearbeitung des Kommentars zum Bonner Grundgesetz*, Hamburg 1984. Helmut Quaritsch, on the other hand, wants to show by harsh critique and special cases, that the right of asylum is misunderstood, if it is taken as a human right (*Das Recht auf Asyl — ein mißdeutetes Grundrecht*. Berlin 1985): When the fathers of the Grundgesetz (GG) took the right of asylum as a human right regarding their own experiences with Nazi-Germany, they put this burden as a kind of reparations on the shoulders of people, who have had no connection with those twelve years of the Third Reich neither geographically nor genetically [sic!] (“eine Art ewiger Reparationslast zugunsten jener, die mit den zwölf Jahren des Dritten Reiches weder räumlich noch genetisch etwas zu tun haben” (49 n. 96). Against this contention Selk (esp. 52; 141-161) shows convincingly, that any reduction of the right of asylum would annihilate this right at all. He reads the formulation of the GG as a subject’s right of the refugee.

⁵ On Herrenchiemsee the constituent assembly discussed the right of asylum with regard to the bill of the human rights of the United Nations, see *Der Parlamentarische Rat 1948-1949. Akten und Protokolle*, hrsg. von Kurt G. Wernicke; Hans Booms 2: *Der Verfassungskonvent auf dem Herrenchiemsee*, bearbeitet von Peter Bucher, Boppard 1981, 220. See also Kreuzberg (see n. 3), p. 43-44, Session of 19.1.1949. Carlo Schmid called the reception of the asylum into the constitution a question of generosity (p. 41, cf. Kreuzberg p. 69) whereas others proposed to grant asylum only to Germans (42; 44 f). In the discussions they were guided by the experiences of «us, who lived in emigrations» (by the “Praxis, die wir politisch Emigrierte hinter uns haben”). But this restriction to political offenders could already be found in the bill of the UN, they used as prototype: “Prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes—do not constitute persecution”. The German formulation on the other hand allows to grant asylum not only to those who are persecuted by a penal court. The jurisdiction accepts in reality often also religious, racial, sometimes even social suppression as reason of asylum, s. Michael Selk: *Asylrecht und Verfassung. Erforderlichkeit bzw. Möglichkeiten einer Änderung des Art. 16 II 2 GG*. [Thesis Kiel] Frankfurt 1990, 15-18. In some cases political prosecution has been seen as constituted (with Max Weber) already by acquisition or defending power (s. idem, n. 92).

⁶ In Switzerland in the years of the Nazi dictatorship only 2.124 men, most of

them Jews, applied for asylum. It was granted for 746 only for they were persecuted not for political, but racial or religious reasons. This was not realized in the discussion, cf. Otto Kirchheimer: *Gegenwartsprobleme der Asylrechtgewährung*. AGF-NRW, G 82. Opladen 1959, 11; idem: *Political justice*. (am. 1961) Neuwied; Berlin 1965, 511-565; the official report to the Swiss Bundesrat: Carl Ludwig: *Die Flüchtlingspolitik der Schweiz seit 1933 bis zur Gegenwart*. Bern ²1966.

⁷ Quaritsch (see n. 4), 28-39: "Privileg politischer Aktivisten".

⁸ The declaration of human rights in the French revolution is analyzed by Wolfgang Schmale: "Rechtskultur im Frankreich des *Ancien Regime* und die Erklärung der Menschen- und Bürgerrechte von 1789". *Francia* 14(1986), 513-529. He shows that jurisdiction in France before the revolution had a high standard. Marcel Gauchet: *La Révolution des droits de l'homme*. Paris 1989 (germ. *Die Erklärung der Menschenrechte. Die Debatte um die bürgerlichen Freiheiten 1789*. Reinbek 1991). When the Catholic Codex iuris Canonici, canon 1179, claimed a right for the Churches to grant asylum, even in time of its promulgation in 1917 this was not tenable against the all-embracing jurisdictional demands of the states.

⁹ Arnold Gehlen: "Asyle. Randzonen menschlichen Verhaltens", in: FS Hans Bürger-Prinz. Stuttgart 1962, 19-36; Karl Dietrich Erdmann: "Roger Williams — das Abenteuer der Freiheit". Kiel 1967, reprinted in K.D.E.: *Geschichte, Politik und Pädagogik*. Stuttgart 1970, 355-371.

¹⁰ An attempt to connect all the different traditions of "liberties" as a history of human rights: Gerhard Oestreich: *Geschichte der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten im Umriß*. (Historische Forschungen 1) Berlin 1968; reprinted with a supplement 1978. Ruprecht Kurzrock (ed.): *Menschenrechte*. Bd 1: *Historische Aspekte*. (Forschung und Information: 30) Berlin 1981: Schnur (see note 1) with the famous lecture of Georg Jellinek 1895.

¹¹ Apart of Erdmann (see n. 9), Wolfgang Fikentscher: "Die heutige Bedeutung des nichtsäkularen Ursprungs der Grundrechte", in: Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde; Robert Spaemann (eds.): *Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde*. Stuttgart 1987, 43-73; cf. Alois Troller: "Wolfgang Fikentschers eleutherische (Prophetisch-jüdisch-christliche) Rechtsmethode", in: *Schweizerische Juristenzeitung* 1978, 53-. Hubert Cancik however, demonstrates the great role of ancient tradition: "Gleichheit und Freiheit. Die antiken Grundlagen der Menschenrechte", in: Günter Kehr (ed.): "*Vor Gott sind alle gleich*". *Soziale Gleichheit, soziale Ungleichheit und die Religionen*. Düsseldorf 1983, 190-210; idem: "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar". Religions- und philosophiegeschichtliche Bemerkungen zu Art I, Satz I GG", in: Hermann Funke (ed.): *Utopie und Tradition. Platons Lehre vom Staat in der Moderne*. Würzburg 1987, 73-107.

¹² Topoi like "outlawry", "vendetta", "arbitrary action", "right of the stronger" etc. are often used in history of law. They have been used as polemical designations of the former situation in political discussions, e.g. in the French Revolution (but not correct, see Schmale [n. 8]). These terms are still used as scientific terms. This model of the evolution of justice is widely accepted, see e.g. Roman Herzog: *Staaten der Frühzeit. Ursprünge und Herrschaftsformen*. München 1988, 285-298, esp. 296; Otto Kimminich: "Asyl, das älteste Recht", in: Herbert Spaich (ed.): *Asyl bei den Deutschen*. Reinbek 1980, 151: "In einer Zeit, als Sippenfehde und Blutrache herrschten und die Gewalt das einzige Mittel gegen Gewalt darstellte, konnte nur Religion humanitäre Gedanken inspirieren, und das Asyl war vielleicht die erste große Wohltat einer beginnenden Rechtsordnung für die leidende Menschheit". See for an opposite view of justice: Simon Roberts: *Order and Dispute*. Harmondsworth 1979. German transl. Stuttgart 1981.

¹³ Renny Golden; Michael McConnel: *Sanctuary. The New Underground Railroad*. Maryknoll, N.Y. 1986: The movement began in spring 1982; they reasoned with the city-asylum Num 35, 15 and with the sanctuary of churches. (I thank Dr. Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz for the reference). The authors do not refer to early Christianity, for this see Michaela Puzicha: *Christus peregrinus. Die paränetische Erörterung und die Motive der privaten Wohltätigkeit in der Alten Kirche am Beispiel der Fremdenaufnahme*. [Thesis Münster] (Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie: 47) Münster 1979. A regrettable shortcoming of this book is the lack of historical context, esp. the fundamental importance of this commendment in the Jesus-movement as itinerant ascetics (Wanderradikalismus), apart of Mt 25, 35 f also Mt 8-11. See Christoph Auffarth: "Jünger". *HrwG* 3(1992), s.v. As for the new (see above n. 8) claim of the churches to grant asylum, conceived as a deferring right of appeal, which is founded in the episcopal right of intercession in later antiquity, s. Uwe Kai Jacobs: "Kirchliches Asylrecht. Aspekte zu seiner geschichtlichen und gegenwärtigen Geltungskraft", *Zeitschrift für evangelisches Kirchenrecht* 35(1990), 25-43 (when he argues for the "originäres Recht aller Kirchen" S. 27 A. 13, I do not agree, because not every church had the right to grant the right of asylum).

¹⁴ Otto Kimminich: "Die Geschichte des Asylrechts", in: *Bewährungsprobe für ein Grundrecht*. Baden-Baden 1978, 19-65; idem: *Grundprobleme des Asylrechts* (EdF 187) Darmstadt 1983, 7-41, who relies on Ortwin Henssler: *Formen des Asylrechts und ihre Verbreitung bei den Germanen*. Frankfurt 1954. Both are used as authorities in the article "Asyl" by Christoph Elsas in: *HrwG* 2(1990), 91-96. Against their explanation of the asylum as originating in a sacral-magic stage, which one can already find in August Bulmerincq: *Das Asylrecht in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung beurteilt vom Standpunkte des Rechtes*, Dorpat 1853 (p. 44 "Geschützt waren die Asyle im Allgemeinen durch die Heiligkeit, die ihnen als geweihten Örtern innewohnte"), Albert Hellwig had stated that the refugee took protection with a mighty person (not the protection of a holy place): *Das Asylrecht der Naturvölker*. (Berliner juristische Beiträge 1) Berlin 1903. Hellwig was a pupil of the founder of the anthropological jurisprudence, Joseph Kohler, who disproved the (imperialistic) thesis of the outlawry of primitive people.

¹⁵ Gerardus van der Leeuw: *Religionsphänomenologie*. Tübingen [1933] ²1956 [repr. 1970] 114-133; Mircea Eliade: "Sakrale Mächtigkeit in der Religionsgeschichte", in: M.E.: *Mythen, Träume Mysterien*. Salzburg 1961, 177-219. Fundamental criticism by Burkhard Gladigow: "Kraft, Macht und Herrschaft. Zur Religionsgeschichte politischer Begriffe", in: B.G. (ed.): *Staat und Religion*. Düsseldorf 1980, 7-22.

¹⁶ Richard Thurnwald: *Werden, Wandel und Gestaltung des Rechts im Lichte der Völkerforschung*. (R.T.: Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen: 5) Berlin; Leipzig 1934, 133: "Mit dem Aufkommen einer höheren ethischen Auffassung von Sühne und Strafe, einem exakten Denken in der Konstruktion von Beweisen der Schuld mußte das Asyl als ein Hemmnis für die Durchsetzung einer geordneten Rechtspflege empfunden werden" (shown by the revision of asyla by the Roman senate in 22 A.D.). In reproaching vicars, who grant asylum, Jacobs (see n. 1) says that the constitutional state as a cultural and ethical good had been achieved with pains (daß "der Rechtsstaat keine beliebige Formalität darstellt, sondern eine mühsam erstrittene kulturelle und rechtsethische Errungenschaft").

¹⁷ Carl Schmitt: *Begriff des Politischen. Text von 1932 mit ... Corollarien*. Berlin 1963, 26. This is taken as fundament of reason in current court sentences concern-

ing cases of asylum: see Michael Selk: *Asylrecht und Verfassung* (see n. 5) 17, n. 93. 'Historians' s. Otto Brunner: *Land und Herrschaft*. Brunn ³1943, 3, n. 1; Christian Meier: "Zur Carl Schmitts Begriffsbildung: Das Politische und der Nomos", in: Helmut Quaritsch (ed.): *Complexio oppositorum. Über Carl Schmitt*. Berlin 1988, 537-556. The formation of the term could not be understood without the anti-semitic assertion that the Jews excluded the members of other ethnic groups and that they were allowed to deceive them, assertions that were subject of various proceedings and expert opinions at lawcourts and were condemned as malicious and false, see e.g. Hermann L. Strack: *Das Blut im Glauben und Aberglauben der Menschheit*. (Schriften des Institutum Judaicum in Berlin: 14) ^{5/7}München 1900; Hermann Cohen: *Die Nächstenliebe im Talmud*. [1889] H.C.: *Der Nächste*. Berlin 1935). The historical dimension is underestimated by Daniel Hoffmann: "Bemerkungen zum Begriff des Nächsten und des Feindes im Anschluß an Cohen und Lévinas". *ZThK* 86(1989), 236-260. He agrees p. 250 with Carl Schmitt, that there is no charity in politics. Even if one concedes this, one must ask whether you take all ideals of humanity, human dignity and human rights as idle gossiping of liberal politicians, ideals, which are hard to fight for and easily destroyed in a moment, when things get serious (durch den Ernstfall). Cf. also Jacob Taubes: *Ad Carl Schmitt. Gegenstrebige Fügung*. Berlin 1987.

¹⁸ Gen 18/19. See Claus Westermann: *Genesis 12-36*. (Biblicher Kommentar I 2) Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, 344-385. [I have to confine myself to but a few notes.] In regard to the stranger in Judaism I mention beside the excellent study of Frank Crüsemann (see below note 30) only J. Jakob Stamm: "Fremde, Flüchtlinge und ihr Schutz im Alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt", in: André Mercier (ed.): *Der Flüchtling in der Weltgeschichte. Ein ungelöstes Problem der Menschheit*. (Universität Bern, kulturhistorische Vorlesungen) Bern 1974, 31-66 with further references.

¹⁹ A very similar story in Judges 19. Critique directed against towns in O.T. Eckart Otto: "'ir". *ThWAT* 6(1989), 56-74; De Vaux: *Lebensordnungen* (see note 40) 1, 38 f.

²⁰ B²⁰šel qorati. For 'shadow' s. E. Schwab: "šel". *ThWAT* 6(1989), 1034-1042, here 1041 (III l.c.), cf. below note 30. An Egypt parallel (which has been transmitted not earlier than in the time of the Ptolemies) prohibits homo-sexual intercourse with strangers, termed a woman's crime: Hellmut Brunner "Gen 19 und das 'Frauenverbrechen'". *Biblische Notizen* 44(1988), 21 f. I thank the author for his hint.

²¹ Dorothy Irvin: *Mytharion. The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 32) Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973; Daniela Flückiger-Guggenheim: *Göttliche Gäste. Die Einkehr von Göttern und Heroen in der griechischen Mythologie*. Bern [u.a.] 1984. Hannjost Lixfeld: *Erdenwanderung der Götter*. Enzyklopädie des Märchens 4(1983), 155-164.

²² The destiny of the righteous ones in the town was discussed in the exile after the destruction of Jerusalem as the central problem of the fall of Israel, cf. Jer 5, 1; Ez 22, 30. Ludwig Schmidt: *De Deo. Studien zur Literarkritik und Theologie des Buches Jona, des Gesprächs zwischen Abraham und Jahwe in Gen 18, 22 ff und Hiob 1*. (B. ZAW 143) Berlin; New York 1976, 131-164 showed that in the dialogue ideals like "the way" *dārāk* and "the righteous one" *šadiq* are used which were not conceived earlier than by the time of exile. Westermann (s. n. 1) withdrew his view, expressed in BK 1, 70-73; 538 f. But it seems to me impossible, to eliminate the dialogue 18, 17-32 without a substitute (so Westermann BK 2, 361). Apart from the theological terms of the exile it stands in the tradition of the story of deluge

(so Westermann, too) and it corresponds in Atrahasis with Enki's intercession for mankind against Enlil: Several times it is said that Enlil decided to destroy mankind against the opinion of the assembly of the gods (e.g. III iii 36 ff). Thus Enki justifies himself for saving Atrahasis ("Noah") with the sentence III vi 25 f: "Impose your penalty [on the criminal, but not on the mankind as a whole] and whoever disregards your command!" (Translation by Wilfred George Lambert; Alan R. Millard: *Atra-ḥasis, the Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford 1969).

²³ [Hermann L. Strack;] Paul Billerbeck: *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*. Vol. 2, München 1924, 206 f.

²⁴ Othmar Keel; Max Küchler: *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel*. Göttingen [u.a.] 1982, 256; Othmar Keel: "Die Zerstörung Sodoms". *ThZ* 35(1979), 10-17.

²⁵ The cultic correspondence to the myth of gods as guests is the *theoxenia*, i.e. to put food in front of—usually several—images of gods standing on a bench. See Flückiger-Guggenheim (see note 21); also to be seen in Atrahasis III iii 30 f; III v 34-36, cf. Christoph Auffarth: *Der Opferstreik. Ein altorientalisches "Motiv" bei Aristophanes und im homerischen Hymnos* (forthcoming).

²⁶ Cf. Burkhard Gladigow: "Epiphanie, Statuette, Kultbild. Griechische Gottesvorstellungen im Wechsel von Kontext und Medium". *Visible Religion* 7(1990), 98-121.

²⁷ The Dionysiac versions of the myth of the reception of the disguised God deal with the revelation and cultic reception of God. This theme can be recognized in the part of Abraham (Gen 18, 1-20) when—after v. 13—v. 15—the dread of the Lord comes over Sara. But later on, Jahweh does not go with the two "men" (19, 1 "angels") to Sodom (18, 22). Chapter 19 deals then only with the law of hospitality. See already Friedrich Horst: "Recht und Religion im Bereich des Alten Testaments" [1956], in: F.H.: *Gottes Recht*. (ThB 12) München 1961, 273: "Eine gegen die Asylverletzung von der dynamistischen Sphäre selbst ausgehende Sanktion scheint jedenfalls schon damals nicht ernsthaft befürchtet worden zu sein". He connects this with the elimination of magic ("Entmagisierung") in the religion of Jahwism, but there is no hint to a magic stage preceding Jahwism.

²⁸ This can be proven by the formula of blessing/curse as well which results in fertility to the righteous, but unfertility and catastrophes to the evildoers. The formula is found as a social institution at the end of treaties, oaths etc., which also lead to a tradition that was received in Ancient Greece from the Ancient Near East, see Christoph Auffarth: *Der drohende Untergang*. (RGVV 39) Berlin; New York 1991, 524-558.

²⁹ Ez 47, cf. Walther Zimmerli: *Ezechiel 25-48*. (Biblicher Kommentar XIII 2) Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979.

³⁰ Frank Crüsemann: "Fremdenliebe und Identitätssicherung. Zum Verständnis der 'Fremden'-Gesetze im Alten Testament". *Wort und Dienst* 17(1987), 11-24, here 20 (foregoing experiences). In difference to Lothar Ruppert: "Der Umgang mit dem Volksangehörigen und mit dem Fremden im alttestamentlichen Gottesvolk", in: Johannes Horstmann (ed.): *Und wer ist mein Nächster?* Schwerte 1982, 1-36, here 16 f. This line of argumentation is not taken from Sacral History (i.e. specific Jewish) but could be found likewise in prayers ("For Thou didst help us already in earlier times..."). In Crüsemann's paper one finds good explanations concerning the laws for strangers (prohibition of usury; not-kosher meat), which had been explained in usual anti-Jewish manner by Bernhard Lang: "nokri". *ThWAT* 5(1987), 454-463 (to cheat strangers; to give carcass to the strangers).

³¹ Frank Crüsemann: "Das Bundesbuch — Historischer Ort und institutioneller Hintergrund." *VT-S 40* [Congress Volume Vienna, ed. J.A. Emerton] 1988, 27-41.

³² See the book of Frank Crüsemann: *Widerstand gegen das Königtum. Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat*. (WMANT 49) Neukirchen-Vluyn 1978, based on Meyer Fortes' and E. Evans-Pritchard's researches in African Political Systems.

³³ Apart from Crüsemann s. Norbert Lohfink: "Die Anfänge Israels". *Bibel und Kirche* 38 (1983), 41-72.

³⁴ See also Psalm 82: In their administration of justice the other Gods violate justice and cause the foundations of the world to tumble. Jahweh denounces their unjust deeds especially against widows, orphans and strangers.

³⁵ Gunther Fleischer: *Von Menschenverkäufern, Baschankühen und Rechtsverkehren. Die Sozialkritik des Amosbuches in historisch-kritischer, sozialgeschichtlicher und archäologischer Perspektive*. (Athenäums Monografien: Theologie 74) Frankfurt 1989.

³⁶ Crüsemann: *Bundesbuch* (see n. 31) shows that on the one hand the social background is that of the early kings, on the other hand the kings played no role in the administration of justice in the communities.

³⁷ Cf. Kedar-Kopfstein: "dām III 2". *ThWAT* 2(1977), 256-260.

³⁸ For a good overview over asylum for homicides in Israel: R. Schmid: "miqlāṭ" *ThWAT* 4(1984), 1132-1137 with further reading; Jacob Milgrom: "Sancta Contagion and Altar/City Asylum". *VT-S 32* [Congress Volume Vienna, ed. J.A. Emerton] 1981, 278-310; L. Schwienhorst: "naga^c". *ThWAT* 5(1986), 219-226.

³⁹ The connection of the asylum for strangers and for homicides is shown by Max Löhr: *Das Asylwesen im Alten Testament*. (Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse 7, 3) Halle 1930, 177 f.

⁴⁰ The word does not mean "planned" in the sense of deliberately (committed murder) as it is usually understood, see Roland De Vaux: *Das Alte Testament und seine Lebensordnungen* 1. [Paris 1961] Freiburg 1964, 258-263, here 259 (containment of private justice): "durch die Unterscheidung von vorsätzlicher und nichtvorsätzlicher Tötung; ... der wirkliche Mörder wird selbst vom Heiligtum weggeholt und dem Tode überliefert Ex 21, 13 f." But the two verses talk about different *casus*. The only other reference for 'armah Josua 9, 2 has to be translated with "deception". Therefore, R. Schmid: "miqlāṭ" (see n. 38), 1133 correctly speaks of "fraud".

⁴¹ The significance of (not accepted) secrecy and (accepted) publicity in the "shame-culture" of Iceland is examined by William Ian Miller: "Dreams, Prophecy and Sorcery: Blaming the Secret Offender in Medieval Iceland". *Scandinavian Studies* 58(1986), 101-123 (I thank Susanne Pohl for the reference).

⁴² Psalm 27, 2-5; for Psalm 23 cf. Willy Schottroff: "Psalm 23". in: W.S., Wolfgang Stegemann (eds.): *Traditionen der Befreiung*. Band 1. München; Gelnhausen 1980, 78-113; idem: "Kirche als unantastbarer Raum für Flüchtlinge. Biblische und aktuelle theologische Aspekte des Asylrechts", in: Luise Schottroff; W.S.: *Die Macht der Auferstehung*. München 1988.

⁴³ De Vaux (see n. 40) 262 f concludes from the name Kedesch that these cities would have been sacral cities, and that therefore the institution of city-asylum could be deduced from temple-asylum. "Andererseits erscheint sie als Säkularisierung eines ursprünglich religiösen Brauchs, vgl. Exodus 21, 13 f: Die Vorrechte der heiligen Stätten und ihrer Diener werden auf die Städte und deren

Rat der Ältesten übertragen''. This is not confirmed by the text. In Dtn 19, 1-13 the elders decided whether somebody was worth being granted asylum. Here, Dtn is only more explicit than the book of Covenant, s. Schmid: "miqlāt", 1133 f. There is no confirmation of the thesis that the institution of city-asylum is a reaction to the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem, as one could not find accessible altars for asylum. Secularization and sacral power of the altar are suppositions not confirmed by the evidence.

⁴⁴ Psalm 61, 4: The wings of Jahweh overshadow those, who search for protection. Psalm 91, 1, cf. the shadow of the roof, which Lot calls protection of the stranger (see above n. 20). Max Löhr (see n. 39), 187 sees the roots of what he calls personal asylum in hospitality too, but as framed by utilitarian goals: "Der Gastfreund als Patron des fremden Händlers verrichtete bei den Geschäften jenes Maklerdienste", i.e. he earned money by granting hospitality. The same idea is found in Hendrik Bolkestein (see n. 45). The laws of the stranger however, do not deal with the business-man *nokri*, but with the poor and powerless stranger, cf. n. 30.

⁴⁵ For the motif and its dissemination in the Ancient Near East and Greece: see n. 21. Studies about the strangers and their rights in Greece: Marie-Françoise Baslez: *L'étranger dans la Grèce antique*. Paris 1984; Ingomar Weiler: "Fremde als stigmatisierte Randgruppe in Gesellschaftssystemen der Alten Welt". *Klio* 71(1989), 51-59 [Both works are not very useful but serve as a pathway to further literature]. The thesis of the "outlawed" stranger (= enemy): Erich Berneker: *Ξενίας γραφή*. RE 9 A 2(1967), 1441-1479, here 1441-1447; opposed already by Hildebrecht Hommel: *Μετοίκοι*. RE 15, 2(1932), 1413-1458; Hendrik Bolkestein: *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristlichen Altertum*. Utrecht 1939, 216-223. Otto Schultheß: *Φυγή*. RE 20, 1(1940), 970-978.

⁴⁶ Gladigow: "Epiphanie" (see n. 26) ch. 4: Unerkannte Götter und verkannte Menschen, 102-104.

⁴⁷ This is a religious category as shown by their slaughter of the cattle of Helios which leads to the ruin of their companions. Their catastrophe is obviously formed parallel to that of the suitors; the poet calls both of them *σχέτλιοι*, in spite of the fact that the suitors slaughter rather too often and employ a special sacrificing priest, *θύοσχος*.

⁴⁸ Od 15. 223-281.

⁴⁹ Od 20. 350-358, cf. Christoph Auffarth (see n. 28) 6.3.3.3.

⁵⁰ Od 7. 32 f; but 7.315 Alkinoos liked to retain the stranger in place of his son-in-law, though "against your wishes none of the Phaeacians will hold you back". In the end—Poseidon acknowledged too late that they had brought back Odysseus in his homeland and therefore he punished them—they decide that they will not receive strangers on their island any more: 13. 161-187.

⁵¹ Jan Bremmer: "Gelon's Wife". *Mnemosyne* 33(1980), 366-368; a mediterranean custom: Julian Pitt-Rivers: "Women and Sanctuary in the Mediterranean", in: J.P.R.: *The Fate of Shechem*. Cambridge 1977, 113-125; 181 f.

⁵² Od 9. 174-176, see Auffarth (see n. 28) 6.1.1 (4).

⁵³ References for a cult of Zeus *Ἰέσιος* in Hans Schwabl: Zeus. RE 9 A(1972), 316 f; RE 8, 2(1913), 1592-; Zeus *ξένιος* Schwabl 341. In his evaluation of these references he does not treat this aspect: RE Suppl. 15(1978), 993-1411.

⁵⁴ Od 9. 475-479; he does not mention his name until 502-505. The transgression of the law of hospitality by the Cyclops is opposed to the protection Odysseus granted to a priest of Apollo, as it is told in the beginning of the adventure—in

a retrospect—9. 197-201. The mistreatment the Cyclops applied to his guests (οὐχ ἄζωο 478) is opposed to Odysseus' care for a defeated enemy (ἄζόμενοι 200).

⁵⁵ Od 23. 62-67, cf. Auffarth (see n. 28), 6.3.3.5.

⁵⁶ Od 24. 413-548. The last scenes of the *Odyssey* are not—as already in Antiquity has been contended and especially later in the so called Homeric Question—a later addition. This is demonstrated by e.g. Hartmut Erbse: *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee*. (UaLG 13) Berlin; New York 1972, 166-244.

⁵⁷ Od 24. 433-436

λῶβῃ γὰρ τάδε γ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι,
εἰ δὴ μὴ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φονῆας
τεισόμεθ'· οὐκ ἂν ἐμοί γε μετὰ φρεσὶν ἡδὺ γένοιτο
ζώμεν, ἀλλὰ τάχιστα θανῶν φθιμένοισι μετεῖην.

For a shame is this even for men that are yet to be to hear
of, if we shall not take vengeance on the slayers of our sons
and our brothers. To me surely life would then no more be
sweet; rather I would die at once and be among the dead.

(Transl. A.T. Murray)

⁵⁸ Zeus states the decisive rule Od 24. 482-486:

ἐπεὶ δὴ μνηστῆρας ἐτείσατο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
ὄρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες ὁ μὲν βασιλευέτω αἰεὶ,
ἡμεῖς δ' αὖ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φόνιοιο
ἔκκλησιν θέωμεν· τοὶ δ' ἀλλήλους φιλεόσωντων
ὥς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνῃ ἄλις ἔστω.

Now that goodly Odysseus has taken vengeance on the wooers,
let them swear a solemn oath, and let him be a king
all his days, and let us on our part bring about a
forgetting of the slaying of their sons and brothers; and let them
love one another as before, and let wealth and peace abound.

⁵⁹ Alitherses holds it a mistake κακότης of the people of Ithaca that they did not keep the suitors from their sacrilegious deeds. On the other hand they had been warned many times, beginning with Penelope and Telemachos, including numerous *omina* sent by the Gods.

⁶⁰ In this point I disagree with the view of Gisela Wickert-Micknat: "Marginalität in der frühgriechischen Gesellschaft und ihre Aufhebung". *Gymn* 97 (1990), 131-144; 481-483.

⁶¹ This is not to be confused with Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf's statement: *Der Glaube der Hellenen* 2. Berlin 1932, 122: "Die Götter greifen ein, wo die weltliche Gewalt, der Staat seine Pflicht versäumt, jedenfalls von den Menschen keine Rechtshilfe zu erwarten ist".

⁶² Hikesia international: Od 14. 276-280. The alternative to flee to an altar-asylum is considered, but rejected: 22. 330-339.

⁶³ John Gould: "Hiketeia" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93(1973), 74-103; carried on by Walter Burkert: *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*. (Sather Classical Lectures 47) Berkeley [u.a.] 1979, 45-52. Critique Victoria Pedrick: "Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*". *TAPhA* 112(1982), 125-140.

⁶⁴ The iconographic material was collected by Odette Toucheffeu: "Aias II". in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* I.1 (Zürich 1981), 336-351. Wolfgang Rösler: "Formes narratives d'un mythe dans la poésie épique lyrique

et les arts plastiques: Ajax de Locres et les Achéens'', in: Claude Calame (ed.): *Métamorphoses du mythe en Grèce antique*. (Religions en perspectives: 4) Genève 1988, 201-209.

⁶⁵ Cf. Peter C. Bol: *Argivische Schilde*. (Olympische Forschungen 17) Berlin 1989, 74: "Der Schild der Athena, der auf älteren Bildern im Profil erscheint, wird hier — in ganzer Größe vor dem Betrachter ausgebreitet und gibt damit der Asylie und dem Frevel noch stärker bildhaften Ausdruck —, steigert die drohende Macht des Götterbildes". This can only be understood as an oxymoron: In spite of the threatening power of the image of the God (which so turns out to be impotent) Ajax commits his sacrilegious deed, without being punished for the moment.

⁶⁶ In his tragedy "Hiketides" ("Maiden applying for asylum") Aischylos on one hand stresses the sacral power of the altar, but on the other he shows that nothing but the community guarantees this right, and, if necessary, defends it by force. Cf. Josef Kopperschmid: *Die Hikesie als dramatische Form*. Thesis Tübingen 1967, 54-73.

⁶⁷ There is no history of the economy of the Greek temple; some good observations are to be found in Tullia Linders; Gullög Nordquist (ed.): *Gifts to the Gods*. (Boreas 15) Uppsala 1987.

⁶⁸ For just how tiny a normal Greek polis was (our views are derived from Athens) see Eberhard Ruschenbusch: *Untersuchungen zu Staat und Politik in Griechenland vom 7.-4. Jh. v.Chr.* Bamberg 1978, 3-17. Fortification of cities with walls began in the most cases in the 5th c. B.C.

⁶⁹ For *σολᾶν* s. the large monograph by Benedetto Bravo: "Sulân. Représailles et justice privée contre les étrangers dans les cités grecques". *Annali de la Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 10, 3(1980), 675-987; see also the review by Philippe Gauthier: *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 1983; Werner Nowag: *Raub und Beute in der archaischen Zeit der Griechen*. [Diss München] Frankfurt 1983; Kurt Latte: *σολᾶν*. RE 4 A 1 (1931), 1035-1039, reprinted in K.L.: *Kleine Schriften*, München 1969, 416-419. — In order to prove that feud had been the normal behaviour before the institution of peace-arrangements for whole countries Otto Brunner (see n. 17) 96 f says: "Raub (λῆς) ist [sc. in Ancient Greece] keine widerrechtliche Handlung, er gilt auch nicht als unmoralisch. Raub ist ein legitimer Akt des Eigentumserwerbs und brachte hohe Ehre ein".

⁷⁰ Epigraphical declarations of this type are studied by Eilhard Schlesinger: *Die griechische Asylie*. Thesis Gießen 1933; Wulfhart Ziegler: *Symbolai und Asylia*. Thesis Bonn 1975; Philippe Gauthier: *Symbola. Les étrangers et la justice dans la cité grecque*. Nancy 1972. Regard the privileges of higher politicians, who often travelled: Fritz Gschnitzer: Proxenos. RE Suppl 13(1973), 629-730; Gabriel Herman: *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City*. Cambridge [u.a.] 1987. Recently (1982) a declaration of asylum has been found, see Peter Herrmann: "Rom und die Asylie griechischer Heiligtümer. Eine Urkunde des Dictators Caesar aus Sardis". *Chiron* 19(1989), 127-164. Herrmann also refers to the deprivation of the right of granting asylum which the Roman senate realized (Tacitus, annales 3. 60-63). The Roman citizenship functions as an equivalent, cf. Paulus in front of Festus Acts 22, 25-29; 25, 1-12.

⁷¹ Hierosylia, "spoiling of holy things", is not prohibited by international law, but generally concerns embezzlement or false use of sanctuary money (against Elsas: Asyl [see n. 14]). See also David Cohen: *Theft in Athenian Law*. (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrologie und Rechtsgeschichte 74) München 1983, 93-115. Nevertheless e.g. during the 27 years of the Peloponnesian War only one temple

has been robbed—by barbarians, s. Tullia Linders: *The Treasurers of the Other Gods*. Meisenheim 1975, 84 A. 46.

⁷² Ulrich Sinn: “Das Heraion von Perachora. Eine sakrale Schutzzone in der korinthischen Peraia”. *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Athen* 105 (1990), 53-116. Xenophon, Agesilaos 11, 1 quotes as a proof of the ἀρετή of Agesilaos that he never mistreated who had fled in the protection of the Gods (ἱκέτας θεῶν), even enemies: It would be silly to designate sanctuary thieves as templerobbers (ιεροσύλους) whereas people, who pulled strangers away from an altar (but donated some money to the temple) were considered as pious (εὐσεβεῖς).

⁷³ Hdt 1. 153-161. Jakob Seibert: *Die politischen Flüchtlinge und Verbannten in der griechischen Geschichte*. Darmstadt 1979, 368 f; 611 A. 146.

⁷⁴ In rage at the revolt of the Lydian, Kyros plans to destroy the capital of Lydia. But his captive (who from the Greek point of view comments continuously his acts), Kroisos, begs for the city. Only Paktyas should be punished, for he alone is the evildoer (Πακτύης γάρ ἐστι ὁ ἀδικέων 155, 3).—His applying for asylum is called “fleeing”, φεύγων, the verbal expression to the terminus technicus for asylum φύξιμον, see Schlesinger: *Asyl* (see n. 70), 29 n. 4; 36-38; Hermann: *Rom* (see n. 70), 146.

⁷⁵ It stood in rivalry to the oracle of Didyma: Strabo 14. 1, 5 contents, that the priests of Branchidai betrayed and so caused the destruction of the oracle by the Persians. Cf. Wolfgang Günther: *Das Orakel von Didyma in hellenistischer Zeit*. (Istanbuler Mitteilungen, Bh 4) Tübingen 1971, 11-19. Klaus Tuchelt: *Branchidai-Didyma*. (Antike Welt-Sondernummer) Mainz 1991.

⁷⁶ In Herodot one finds a behaviour like this several times, cf. Burkhard Gladigow: “Χρησθαι θεοῖς. Orientierungs- und Loyalitätskonflikte in der griechischen Religion”, in: *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte. FS für Carsten Colpe*. Ed. by Christoph Elsas; Hans G. Kippenberg. Würzburg 1990, 237-251.

⁷⁷ Ἀνοσιώτατε ἀνθρώπων, τί τάδε τολμᾷς ποιεῖν; τοὺς ἱκέτας μου ἐκ τοῦ νηοῦ κεραῖζεις; Birds applying for asylum in Ancient Near East Psalm 84, 4 “Also the sparrow found a house and the swallow nest, to put down her kids: Thine altars, Yahwe Zebaoth, my king and my God”. Further evidence in Hermann Gunkel: *Die Psalmen* (Göttinger Handkommentar zum AT II 2) Göttingen 1926, 368 f.

⁷⁸ Gladigow (see n. 76); see also: Wilfried Nippel: “Ethnographie und Anthropologie bei Herodot”, in: W.N.: *Griechen, Barbaren und “Wilde”. Alte Geschichte und Sozialanthropologie*. Frankfurt 1990, 11-29; 152-156; Christine Sourvinou-Inwood: “‘Myth’ and History: on Herodotus III. 48 and 50-53”. *Opuscula Atheniensi* 37(1988), 167-188.

⁷⁹ ἐξ ἱεροῦ Ἀθηναίης πολιούχου ἀποσπασθεῖς 160, 3.

⁸⁰ Herodotus does not tell how the story ended for Paktyas. When he is mentioned for the last time in 160, 5, he still is alive. Herodotus does not trace back the following fall of the Ionian cities to the sacrilegious betrayal of asylum, but to the curse of ill-gained money 160, 5 and the premature death of the Persian general, who demanded the delivery 160, 2 and 161. In 6. 75, 3 Kleomenes dies for transgression of the right of asylum.

⁸¹ Thuc 1. 126; with all references Hans Schaefer: *Xenelasia*, RE 9 A 2(1967), 1436-1438.

⁸² I avoid the problematic term basic values (Grundwerte). See Carl Schmitt; Eberhard Jüngel; S. Schelz: *Die Tyrannei der Werte*. Hamburg 1979; David Seeber: “Wertewandel”, in: Ulrich Ruh (e.a. ed.): *Handwörterbuch religiöser Gegenwartsfragen*. Freiburg [a.o.] 1986, 488-493. In the discussion about right Rüdiger Voigt (ed.): *Abschied vom Recht?* (es 1185) Frankfurt 1983, especially Wolfgang Seibel: “Abschied vom Recht — eine Ideologie?”, 134-169 (concerning Carl Schmitt).

CONFERENCES

PANEL ON JONATHAN Z. SMITH'S *DRUDGERY DIVINE*

Introduction: Critique and Construction in Jonathan Z. Smith's Drudgery Divine

LARRY J. ALDERINK

Two sessions at the 1991 annual convention of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature, held in Kansas City, MO, were devoted to discussions of Jonathan Z. Smith's *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990). Two of the papers, those by Hans G. Kippenberg and Burton L. Mack, that are printed here were presented at the first session, organized by Luther Martin for the North American Association for the Study of Religion, focused on methodological problems involved in the comparative study of religions. The remaining papers, those by John Dominic Crossan and Marvin W. Meyer, were read at the second session, organized by Larry J. Alderink and C. Robert Phillips for the Greco-Roman Religions Group of the Society of Biblical Literature, where specialists from several fields explored Smith's claim in relation to their work.

The main claims of *Drudgery Divine* emerged in the discussions at both sessions and are evident in the papers that follow. One may divide the claims into two categories, the first concerning Smith's critique of the study of early Christianities of Late Antiquity and the second consisting of his constructive proposals for the general comparative study of religion.

First the critique.

Smith's examination of the archaeological data dating to the end of the 2nd century leads to the conclusion that the Christian dead remained part of the extended Christian family and enjoyed continued kinship with the living, which does not inspire confidence in an ancient Christian belief in immortality or a resurrection and final judgment. On this view, the traditions of Christ witness to *pistis/fides* as a sense of confidence in the way things in the world were arranged and, moreover, in religion as a way to keep them in their proper place.

Smith's investigation of the earliest literary tradition displays Christianities which advocate change, as the Christianities themselves were undergoing change. The virtue to be employed here is *metis* rather than *sophia*, for truth was to be won rather than given as the earliest Christians in northern Palestine imagined a state other than the way things are and distinguished how they are from how they ought to be. These Christians were confident of the possibility of putting things into their proper place.

The apostle Paul, Smith contends, subjected the Christ-traditions to a utopian understanding, that is, to the model of breaking free from limitations and boundaries in order to achieve salvation through transcendence. The result is that remediation, rectification, healing, and sanctification are absent; a new utopian turn has been taken with a desire for personal transcendence as if the world were not worthy unless transformed.

From his examination of the archaeological and literary record, Smith draws the conclusion that the mystery cults and non-Pauline forms of the Christian tradition have more in common with each other than does Pauline Christianity with non-Pauline Christianity. This is a startling assertion, contradicting customary modes of comparing early Christianities which have been conducted, Smith alleges, in bad faith because "the old Reformation myth, imagining a 'pristine' early Christianity centered in Paul and subjected to later processes of 'corruption', has governed all the modulations we have reviewed" (143).

This brief summary of Smith's critique of New Testament scholarship shows three protective strategies designed to establish the uniqueness and incomparability of a theological version of Christianity imposed on the first century. An anti-pagan tactic aimed to protect Christianity from paganism. An anti-post-canonical yet pro-Jewish move sought to protect Christianity from degeneration and corruption by hierarchy and priest. Finally, an anti-Jewish strategy tried to protect Christianity from its Jewish antecedents and contemporaries. All these efforts serve to justify the uniqueness of Christianity, and particularly the dying and rising Christ, the Christevent, or the Risen Lord.

The constructive theses about the comparative study of religion accompanying the critique in *Drudgery Divine* are equally provocative. I shall mention five.

First, genealogy and analogy must be distinguished. Whereas genealogy will seek to establish relations of borrowing and dependency between religions in order to privilege one religion, analogy will emphasize the intellectual operations of those making comparisons and their vocabulary of similarity and difference, transformation and reversal, conjunction and disjunction, family resemblances etc. Comparisons will

be multi-term statements of analogy and difference expressed in formulations as “ x resembles y more than z with respect to...” or “ x resembles y more than w resembles z with respect to...”

Second, a distinction between utopian and locative models is useful for analyzing religions of late antiquity and may be useful for other comparative work as well. A utopian model will emphasize breaking out of boundaries and breaking free from walls; the norm will be salvation achieved through acts of rebellion and transcendence. A locative model will emphasize place and keeping things in place as the norm and rectification if the norm is breached.

Third, the language of uniqueness should no longer be spoken, for it encourages us to abandon the comparative work of similarity and difference, demands that we impose ontological significance on historical matters, and that we attribute superlative value to one religion at the moment we devalue other religions. Similarity and difference will be the common language, for they invite interpretation and explanation.

Fourth, comparison is an intellectual operation, and thus it is neither natural nor based on givens. Because comparison involves relations and aspects rather than things, it will preserve neither whole entities nor local meanings. Rather comparison will be a re-visioning of phenomena as our data to solve our theoretical problems. Comparison will bring differences together solely within the space of the scholar’s mind, “imagining their cohabitation,” as Smith puts it. This is the analogical enterprise. The distance between model and data will mean that the study of religion is not a religious activity.

Fifth, comparison should be historically oriented and thus emphasize the interplay of continuity and discontinuity internal to a tradition, the shifts within a tradition from one to another perspective, and the relations between one tradition and another.

Where will this lead? The preface of *Drudgery Divine* invites us to rethink “the comparative enterprise in modes appropriate to the academy’s self-understanding as well as to its perception of the processes and goals of disciplined inquiry. (vii). The next to the last line of the book encapsulates the point: “a phenomenon will be privileged only with respect to its utility for answering a theoretical issue concerning the scholarly imagination of religion” (143).

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*Comparing Ancient Religions.
A Discussion of J. Z. Smith's 'Drudgery Divine'*

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

J. Z. Smith tells us two stories in his book: the story of a great chain of scholarly misunderstandings, and the story of describing similarities between ancient Christianity and the religions of Late Antiquity. Both stories are carefully studied, reported with numerous valuable suggestions and ably presented.

Reading this book made me feel like being under the treatment of an intellectual health service. Smith has chosen the study of Mystery religions as an example of the obstinate impact that tacit assumptions make on comparative studies and the distortions produced by them. Like a good doctor Smith diagnoses the disease. This disease has its roots in a long history of theological bias deriving from Protestant apologetics against Catholics. In these controversies ancient Mystery religions played the same role that sacraments perform in religions such as Catholicism. Well-known Protestants of different professions agreed that the early Church lost its genuine character by adapting to the Mystery religions. Because of this background the issue of similarities between pagan religions and ancient Christianity became a battlefield of hidden theological wars.

Smith provides evidence of an obvious failure of the so-called hermeneutical circle. In understanding others we must refer to our own experience and knowledge. But at the same time we have to rule out misunderstandings deriving from our own assumptions. Only by revising them can a good understanding be attained. In this context we may recall the names of F. Schleiermacher and H.-G. Gadamer who view misunderstanding and not understanding as the normal condition in communication. The case, Smith presents, is an example of this unfortunate rule. He shows how a theological assumption tacitly governs comparisons even in the work of scholars of high repute. This disease has seldom been identified as clearly as he has done.

If the size of a footnote indicates a central concern of an author the note on Kirsopp Lake and Arthur Darby Nock deserves our special attention. Kirsopp Lake had argued that already with Paul, "Christianity became sacramental—or a Mystery religion." By saying this he offended the Protestant consensus concerning early Christian ritual especially its difference from the Mystery cults. Nock rejected Lake's interpretation and pointed instead to the Jewish background of early Christianity. According to

Nock, the religious history of ancient Judaism was sufficient to account for the Mystery elements in Paul. Smith subjects this thesis to rigorous scrutiny and discovers once more the old wine in new bottles: for Nock Judaism functioned as a pure island from which early Christianity had departed. The cargo it took on board had been purified even if it was once derived from pagan religions. Jewish descent confers honour, pagan descent must be legitimized.

By applying this treatment to well-known scholars Smith directs our attention to a paradox: The more our historical knowledge about the involvement of early Christianity in the history of ancient religions has increased the more a peculiar practice of comparing intervened and neutralized the threat. In a passage even more crucial as the note on Lake and Nock, Smith proposes a cure for this disease. He demands a thorough revision of the comparative method. According to Smith comparisons should be regarded as a means for describing degrees of similarity and dissimilarity between two independent objects, with respect to a question, a theory, a model. In the study of Early Christianity this question was tacitly the uniqueness of Christianity. Similarities with pagan religions were described either as independent parallels (not threatening the distinctness of early Christianity), or as borrowings that testify to the adaptation of Christian religions to paganism. The foundation text for this distinction he found with Adolf Deissmann. In his famous "Licht vom Osten," Deissmann raised the question whether obvious parallels were borrowings or independent expressions of similar religious experiences. Each observation of similarity, Deissmann demanded, had to be assessed with respect to this alternative: analogy or genealogy?¹ In his discussion of this assertion Smith proposes to remove the category 'genealogy' from the study of religions completely. What remains are analogies, nothing more.

As an example I would like to focus upon his interpretation of the so-called Mediterranean 'dying and rising gods.' Recent research has made it likely that an interpretation of these gods as representing death and rebirth is untenable for the simple reason that the majority of them died without returning. They were at best rescued from complete annihilation. So they are certainly not the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Smith refers to a study by G. S. Gasparro describing in what sense Attis is granted survival: His body does not decay, his hair continues to grow, a finger remains in motion (Smith o.c. p. 127). This strange picture doesn't deter Smith from comparisons with Christianity. Similar varieties of the concept of survival are known also in the early Church. A study by Burton Mack (*A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*. Philadelphia 1988)

serves him as proof. In comparing pagan and Christian religions we do not detect borrowings; at best we recognize common meanings. During their history and dissemination in the Roman Empire pagan cults gradually developed from a ritual of purification into a baptism of salvation, from locative to utopian settings. The same variety of concepts of survival exists among early Christianity.

When Professor Lawson invited me to participate in the annual meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Religion he asked me to provide besides an analysis of Smith's recent book also a critique. Turning now to this part of my homework I would like to account for the criteria I have chosen. Fortunately the case of professor Smith makes this task easy. Some years ago he succeeded in describing the essence of the academic study of religion in a way which immediately convinced me. He argued: "For the self-conscious student of religion, no datum possesses intrinsic interest.... [The student] must be able to articulate clearly why 'this' rather than 'that' was chosen as an exemplum. ... Implicit in this effort of choice are three conditions. ... First, that the datum has been well and truly understood. This presumes a mastery of both the primary materials and the tradition of their interpretation. Second, that the datum be displayed in the service of some important question, some fundamental theory, some paradigm, some element in the imagination of religion. Third, and of paramount importance, that there be some method for explicitly relating the datum to the theory, the question, the paradigm, and evaluating each in terms of the other."² Let me take the last point (the explicit evaluation of theory and data in terms of each other) as a criterion when checking the structure of "Drudgery Divine."

First, the evaluation of the data: J. Z. Smith maintains repeatedly (for example on p. 118) that it is not the data but aspects of the approach which are the main problem in comparing ancient Christianity and the Mystery religions. I would like to raise the question: How is this possible if the choice of data is as dependent on theoretical assumptions, as the author himself shows? I would like to point in this regard to the demarcations he gives to the notion 'Mystery religions.' He completely neglects the Orphic tradition though it has left its obvious imprints on Jewish and Christian literature and iconography. What is his reason for doing so? I suspect that it has to do with the aims Smith is pursuing. Orphic notions and pictorial images were used by Jews and Christians to attribute to their religions a particular meaning that had pagan origins. If we would evaluate the historical impact of Mystery religions on Judaism and Christianity, the Orphic Mysteries are important. But Smith is evidently not

interested in instances of dependence but of independent analogies. The polemical issue of sacraments delimits the range of data he chooses for comparison.

According to my view the body of data do not and cannot remain the same if the description of ancient Mystery religions is stripped from the bias of Protestant-Catholic controversies. If we abandon this forced point of view, we also have to revise the demarcation of the data. If we evaluate the data in the light of Deissmann's alternative then the case of Orphism requires our attention as an example of "borrowing." Smith is certainly right in doubting the value of this model. It assumes distinctions that are too precise between Jewish, Christian and pagan religions. The historical sources testify to the contrary. Take for example the ancient Jewish notion of martyrdom. A recent Dutch study has convincingly demonstrated that it was created by using Greek political ethics idealizing dying for the ancestral laws of a political community (*patrioi nomoi*).³ A Greek political concept was adopted to attribute to Jewish religion a meaning in accordance with the ancient political communication on religion. In ancient society there existed a common store of pragmatic meanings given to religions with regard to the civic constitution of ancient towns. If we evaluate the data in the light of the fundamental alternative dependent or independent parallel then the range of data Smith has chosen in his study should be broadened. To depict David as Orpheus, as was done in the synagogue of Dura-Europos, attributes to Jewish religion a meaning that is dependent on pagan sources as well as on a Jewish re-interpretation of David.

My second remark addresses the evaluation of theory in the light of the data. Similarities, Smith tells us, exist only in the head of an observer. He writes in italics: "All comparisons are properly analogical" (p. 51). They do not permit conclusions regarding the origins of these similarities. Why not, I would like to ask? It is the scholar, Smith replies, who makes their cohabitation possible, not processes of history. Why not processes of history, I would be inclined to insist. Smith warns us that options of borrowing disguise and obscure the scholar's interests. I would agree, but raise the question, anyway: Is this a sufficient argument to remove a whole option from our research strategies? I would like to defend Adolf Deissmann who maintained that similarities between different religions can be explained either as diffusion or as independent development. This is a crude alternative, indeed. But the issue at stake is whether we have to remove the category of diffusion from our scientific tools entirely or whether we have instead to improve it? If an observer discovers a certain number of similarities between two objects he should be required to

explain this fact. Even if we agree that the model of Deissmann is a too narrow one, we need not doubt the underlying distinction that Deissmann had principally in mind.

Smith obviously prefers the category of analogy to that of homology (or genealogy), while the scholars he criticizes have often preferred genealogy. Both terms, analogy and homology, are derived from the classification of biological objects. Objects belonging to the same kind are homologous. Objects of different kind that fulfill the same function are analogous. Homology and analogy were already in use in earlier comparative religion. For example, Heinrich Frick introduced them in 1928 in his book "*Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft*" for the purpose of discerning two different cases of similarity between religions. Christianity and Islam are both founded by prophets. As prophets Jesus and Mohammed are of the same kind and therefore homologous. But in Christianity and in Islam these prophets fulfill different functions. Salvation is coming from Jesus Christ in Christianity, from the Qu'ran in Islam. Therefore Jesus Christ and the Qu'ran are analogous. Though different in kind they perform the same functions.⁴

If we evaluate our theoretical tools in the light of the data we need a distinction regarding two types of similarity. If the Jewish community at Dura-Europos has depicted David as Orpheus it "borrowed" a pictorial scheme from the pagan art tradition. By applying it to David it transformed as well the pagan meaning of this scheme as the meaning given to David in Jewish thought. This example points to the necessity of keeping a category of diffusion instead of removing it altogether.

Hans Jonas has pointed in his book on gnosticism to a phenomenon he called 'pseudomorphosis.' Platonic language is used to infuse native traditions with a Gnostic meaning. If we study our theoretical options in the light of such cases it makes sense to improve the category of 'borrowing' instead of dropping it.

In short, as summary of my criticism I would say: the study of J. Z. Smith is convincing in detecting hidden assumptions in the study of ancient religions. In this regard it is a great break-through. It is less convincing in reconstructing a better model of explaining similarities between different ancient religions. I read a lot of valuable suggestions, but not a new paradigm. If I would give an explanation for this shortcoming I would suppose that the homology—analogy typology belongs more to the disease than to the remedy. It is inspired by an idea of pure borders between natural species. But in the history of religions these are the exceptions, not the rule.

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¹ *Licht vom Osten. Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt.* 4.ed. Tübingen, 1923, p. 226.

² J. Z. Smith, "No Need to Travel to the Indies. Judaism and the Study of Religion." In: J. Neusner (ed.), *Take Judaism, for Example. Studies toward the Comparison of Religions.* Chicago/London 1983, p. 215-226 on p. 218.

³ J. W. van Henten, *De Joodse Martelaren als Grondleggers van een Nieuwe Orde. Een studie uitgaande van 2 en 4 Makkabeen.* Diss.theol. Leiden 1986; derselbe (Hg.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie.* Leiden 1989.

⁴ H. Frick, *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft.* Berlin/Leipzig 1928 p. 16.

After Drudgery Divine

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Introduction

This response to Jonathan Z. Smith's *Drudgery Divine* represents the substance of my remarks on two different occasions at the society meetings in Kansas City, 1991. The first part was presented to the North American Association for the Study of Religion, the second to the Greco-Roman Religions group of the Society of Biblical Literature. Part I addresses Smith's contribution to theory and method in the study of religion. Part II addresses his challenge to scholars in the field of New Testament studies.

I. Drudgery and the History of Religions

Drudgery Divine uncovers the theological agendum that has motivated the comparison of early Christianity with the religions of late antiquity. Working in the overlap between New Testament studies and the history of religions, Jonathan Z. Smith traces the history of attempts to protect the pristine origin of Christianity from both "pagan" and Jewish influence, focusing especially upon the question of early Christianity and the so-called mystery religions. In course, however, he also demonstrates the effect of the Protestant view of Catholic Christianity in the emergence of comparative religions as a field of study, a discipline that has frequently thought to have extricated itself from Christian specific terminology and

definition. This Protestant bias is difficult to see when Christian language is dropped and designations of religious phenomena are used that seem to be descriptive and appear to be universally applicable in the comparative process. Smith's reportage of a vast bibliography lets us see that the Protestant definition of religion underlies all of the major theories of religion that have been used to compare Christianity with other religions. I can therefore see why *Drudgery* has caught the attention of historians of religion and why the North American Association for the Study of Religion has set aside a session to engage Smith on issues of method and theory by having a look at this book.

Drudgery makes a proposal for doing religious studies another way. It is Smith's clearest, most forthright statement to date of how he thinks the comparative enterprise should be set up and pursued in order not to fall into the failures and limitations of other models that have dominated the history of the discipline. But one does need to read carefully. That is because his critique of the way comparison has been misused in the history of the history of religions is the obvious point of the book, whereas his own proposal for doing comparative studies occurs mainly in the form of corrective remarks along the way. In order to construct a model of Smith's method, one needs to read *Drudgery* in the light of his long-standing project of doing comparative studies and of thinking about comparison as an intellectual operation and theoretical discipline. If we want to ponder both Smith's method and his theory, I think we shall have to read more of Smith, and for his theory we shall have to focus on his other recent book, *To Take Place*. To be quite frank about it, I'm worried just a bit that *Drudgery Divine* is the book that has caught our attention when *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (1987) should have created the first and bigger excitement. But perhaps it did and I, as a student of Christian origins, was just not aware of it.

After twenty years of provocative, analytical essays, Smith finally violated Ben Sira's caution about disclosing one's secrets and told us plainly where to locate his intellectual workshop and its theoretical foundations. As I understand *Place*, Smith gives us there his pedigree of trysts with the scholars he has found to be strong and worthy to debate: Hume (for the rational and empirical foundations), Durkheim (for the sociology of religion), Dumézil (for the discovery of patterns capable of cross-cultural comparison and historical modulation), and Lévi-Strauss (for the integration of social structuration with the fundamental logic of human thought as articulated in systems of dual classification). There is also the acknowledgment of a little help from Kant, Dumont, Wheatley and Geertz. Smith lets us see both his indebtedness to and his disagreements

with each of these precursors at every turn, and he uses each encounter to make a constructive theoretical proposal of his own. After *Place* there should be no question about Smith's locative and social theory of religion. Religion is the way in which a people make the world work, position themselves in their world, acknowledge their agreements, reflect upon their relationships, inculcate their manners and codes, rectify displacements, and meditate upon their social system in the light of accident and the impingements of history. The theory is based in a thoroughly social, rational, and constructive anthropology.

When we make a pair of *Place* and *Drudgery*, *Place* addresses privileged mythologies of location (of the temple and the church of the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem) in order to develop a theory of ritual, and *Drudgery* addresses a privileged example of ritual (Christian rituals of death and resurrection) by attending to its locative mythologies. *Drudgery* does not spell out Smith's theory of religion, nor does it demand that we accept his theory of religion in order to pursue our comparative projects. But it does demand, I think, that we see the point about comparison as fundamental for the field and as integral to human thinking, both our own and that of the people we might wish to study. I see no way around that. Making studied comparisons is basic to Smith's method and has been exemplified in all of his essays, for each is an exercise in comparison, and some, most notably the "*Adde parvum...*" essay (in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* [1978]), have addressed the subject of comparison directly and worked out typologies that *Drudgery* presupposes. *Drudgery* contributes to this project by forcing the issue of consequence when comparisons are made without attention to parity and the rules that govern scientific investigation. Parity intends more than giving equal time and detailed attention to each exemplum in a comparative project. It means that, in the academy where scientific discourse is supposed to prevail, every exemplum from whatever culture be treated as a fully-fledged human accomplishment with no privileges granted.

Smith's comparative method is both simple and ingenious. (It is not for that reason easy of execution.) For any given study, no matter how limited or large in scope, we need to pay attention to our categories. (It is also the case, of course, that we should require of each other an explicit acknowledgement of the theory or model with which we are working, reasons for our interest in the phenomenon in question, reasons for the selection of data, control of the investigation, clearly articulated assessments of what we have learned, and reflections on the conclusions as a testing of the original theory, model, or hypothesis with which the study began.) But the truly ingenious feature of Smith's program for the

application of the scientific model of investigation to social and cultural phenomena lies in his proposal for what he has called the *rectification* of categories. That is because, for Smith, a category in our field takes the place of a theorem, proposition or hypothesis in the natural sciences model. In one place he calls it a "superordinate category," and this becomes a third and theoretically controlling factor in any responsible comparative project. A category should not cease to be descriptive, derived as it must be from observations on the surface of social behavior, things that other scholars also can observe, but it must be general enough to designate a set of phenomena thought to be similar in some respect while differing in their specific cultural articulations. A category should be capable of handling both similarities and differences in cross-cultural comparisons.

The category as a descriptive generalization has tremendous theoretical significance for the humanities, because it allows for the construction and testing of general theories without the need of making universal claims. According to Smith, rectified categories (or descriptive generalizations) are the building blocks for the pursuit of a general theory that explains religion as part and parcel of the intellectual labor humans invest in making their worlds work and in finding their working societies interesting. Because there are many ways to make a society work, a given category, say ritual sacrifice, need not claim universal status. But it does need to be explained as making a contribution to the human enterprise of social construction.

This definition of the field, I think, is the advantage of Smith's program over other ways of proceeding in the study of religion. It does demand a rigorous and imposing execution of thick descriptions for each exemplum of a set in order to assure parity, register differences, and establish adequate "situations" as the multifaceted contexts within which a particular behavior, imagination, or religious phenomenon makes sense. "Situation" is a very important Smithian term for the social, cultural, and historical factors of significance for analyzing a phenomenon and for testing the adequacy of the categories we use to describe it. For Smith religion is meaningful activity related to the human project of taking interest in the world, but you cannot get him on the functionalist fallacy or the reductionist charge because he refuses single system explanations and single factor equations. The human project is much too complex for that and religious phenomena, in order to be interesting and adequately explained, will always have to be set in relation to the larger human enterprise. It is this horizon that gives the rectification of a category significance as a contribution to the construction of a theory of religion

that can handle multiple formulations of such phenomena as rituals, myths, and symbolic worlds.

With Smith, therefore, we can pursue our studies in the hope of learning something in general without postponing our desire to understand religion until the Boasian project is completed by ethnographers, Eliade's Sacred is located by phenomenologists, or those who define religion in terms of religious experience discover the social. I, for one, prefer not to wait for any of these eventualities, impossible as I judge each of them to be.

II. Drudgery and New Testament Studies

Reading Smith's citations from the history of our discipline is painful and devastating. It is painful because of the adamant persistence, studied naiveté, and shrewd stratagems that mark the Protestant bias at work in the comparison of early Christianity with the religions of late antiquity. It is devastating because the apologetic goal of New Testament scholarship has surfaced at every turn: the protection of a Protestant myth of Christian origins.

The strategy in general has been to play off Jewish backgrounds against Greek influence in the interest of cancelling each other out. Jewish roots have always been somewhat less of a problem because a negative comparison is fundamental to the Protestant theologies of law/gospel (or promise/fulfilment; sacrificial system/faith reformation). One needed only to superimpose the evolutionary model of staged development upon the epic history of Old and New Testaments in order to claim Jewish prophetic genealogy while at the same time cutting the cord to a sacrificial system or a supposedly Pharisaic legalism to posit reform as transformation.

With the mystery religions, however, the point of comparison has been much more difficult to manage. Whenever the point of contact got as close to the origins of Christianity as Paul's Christ cult, it was too close for comfort. The strategies to avoid an acknowledgment of the similarities have varied dramatically in keeping with information about the mystery cults and theories of religion available at the time. One strategy has been to acknowledge partial *analogical* similarities, but deny *homology*, i.e. any genealogical connection. Another has been to switch to the Septuagint as the more immediate genealogical parent for the meaning of terms, using Judaism as an "insulator" as Smith says. Another strategy has been to shift chronology and claim that the mysteries were influenced by Christianity, not the other way around. These efforts have been made solely in the interest of protecting the claim that Christianity was (is) a unique and incomparable religion with pristine origination.

The shocking effect of Smith's study is not merely the disclosure of this persistent theological bias underlying the hermeneutical agenda of New Testament studies as a discipline. It is the naiveté with which assumptions about religion and Christian origins have informed the discipline and gone without notice or critique. It is also the unacknowledged shrewdness with which stratagems have been devised to press ahead with learning about Christian origins even while guarding the unapproachable mystery assumed to be at its core. Lest we think that the times have changed, that post-Eliade it is now OK to think of Christianity as a religion of myth and ritual without the bug-a-boo of contamination by pagan superstition, that our lesson has surely been learned, and that the embarrassing citations Smith notes from our current colleagues are merely a few unfortunate slips (survivals) from our rocky past, I'd like to mention two recent studies that illustrate the continuing persistence of the problem Smith has identified, each of which surfaces a new stratagem of denial.

One study is by a New Testament scholar, Hans-Joseph Klauck, called *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult* (1982). It is an exhaustive collection of data for the comparison of the Lord's supper tradition in 1 Corinthians with hellenistic cult meals. He organizes the data with a meal typology as follows: (1) myths of gods at meal, (2) rituals of offering food to the gods, (3) sacrificial meals in the presence of the gods, (4) communion sacrifice or eating with the gods, (5) theophagy or eating the gods, (6) covenant meals, (7) fellowship meals, (8) funeral and memorial meals, (9) daily meals with prayers and libations, (10) mystery meals, and (11) sacramental meals. Wonder of wonders! There are no exact parallels. His conclusion: the Lord's supper was unique, incomparable, uninfluenced by pagan religions, and can only be explained as an institution that originated with Jesus on the night he was betrayed just as the tradition says. Taking Smith seriously, the better conclusion would be that "sacrificial meal," Klauck's overarching category for the entire typology, is actually a non-category, a self-serving notion that condenses centuries of Christian practice and interpretation in pseudo-descriptive terms and thus is fully inadequate for either the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11 or a study of hellenistic cults, much less a comparison among them.

The second study is Walter Burkert's recent book on *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987). Here is a classicist and world-class scholar on Greek religions daring to address the messy world of late antiquity. We can laud his desire to challenge older stereotypes of the mysteries: that they were a late development of the Roman period, that they were "Oriental" in origin, that they were religions of otherworldly salvation cultivating myths of the dying and rising gods. We can also appreciate his consistent program of

demystifying the notion of “secrets,” his emphasis upon the mystery cults as forms of votive religion, his helpful remarks about initiation rituals, and of course his remarkable erudition. But it is clear that the major counterpoint at every turn was Christianity, and that in comparison with Christianity the mystery cults come up short in Burkert’s view. They lacked credo, conversion, baptism, alternative self-producing community, social institutionalization, mission, social ethics, systematic theology, symbolic meal, and a gospel of resurrection to immunize believers against suffering and death. Burkert does not acknowledge that these comparisons, registered as ad hoc asides, amount to a hidden agenda, and it may well be that he was actually unaware of what he did. But it is obvious to the reader that even the outline of the book, and thus the principle of organization of materials, presupposes a definition of religion beholden to Christianity. Chapter (1): (paraphrasing a bit) The personal need for salvation; (2) The problem of personal identity and the need for community; (3) The quest for a myth capable of both natural and supernatural theologization; and (4) Experimentation with rituals of dramatic, personal, consciousness-altering transformation. In every case of detail, as well, Burkert’s holistic notion of Christianity is the standard for comparison with the mysteries. Yet they were cults; Christianity was a religion. Christianity did not borrow from the mysteries. They experimented and died; Christianity worked and survived. In Smith’s terms there is no parity to this comparison, though the imbalance between a detailed study of the one and a frozen, holistic conception of the other has been turned around from that typical for the tradition of investigation where early Christianity has been studied in much more detail than the mystery cults to which it has been compared (Smith, *Drudgery*, 108). The results, however, are the same: genealogy denied (Burkert, 101), analogies ranked and the inferior discounted, and the conclusion a triumphalist evaluation, though stated in reverse, namely that the mysteries (remember now that Burkert has traced their existence through a millenium and a half) were “too fragile” to survive (Burkert, 114).

So we need a better way to organize our data and set up our comparisons. Smith calls for a conscious shift away from apologetic interests to interest in the cognitive enterprise of studying religion in order to *understand* it and hopefully make some contribution to the humanities. If we want to join that enterprise we can no longer use the humanities selectively in order to offer favorable comparisons of Christianity with itself and enjoy the illicit hermeneutical fruits.

Smith’s program is not ideological, mysterious, or difficult, except perhaps in the sense that it demands rigorous intellectual labor in the

application of the comparative method to social and cultural phenomena. We should want to do that. We should want to make our theories of religion explicit, something we have bothered to do since the days of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. We should want to articulate the models we use for understanding how some feature fits or works in a larger frame of social and cultural reference. We should want to pay attention to the categories by which we designate a phenomenon for study and comparison. The better and more interesting categories are always descriptive, but general enough to designate phenomena in different cultures found to be comparable without bracketing the differences that must remain in view. We should want to account for the data we select as appropriate to the comparison. And we should want to account for both the similarities and differences in relation to descriptions of the several situations “thick” enough to test and revise our models and theories in conversation with other disciplines that are working toward social and cultural anthropologies capable of making sense of religion.

As an example of the Smithian task before us, notice the difference it makes when we switch nomenclatures (categories) from Eucharist, to Lord’s supper, to sacrificial meal, to symbolic meal, to association meal. The description changes, the data enlarges of comparable meal rituals from the cultures of context, and the questions raised by the comparisons called for shift from theological concerns to social and anthropological issues of import for theorizing about religion.

Conclusion

Naturally, we may want to question Smith about his views on a number of matters that may remain unclear. In particular, I wonder what more Smith might say about the naivité of the religionists he has studied, the apparent unawareness of their “interest,” as Smith names it, or at least of the way their interests affected their theories of religion, comparative logics, critical thinking, and devisement of stratagems. It is not enough to account for this as merely situational, lacking only in the learning that comes from trial and error, as if categories should automatically be rectified in the process of comparison. The clever moves to avoid the consequences of new learning are all too obvious for that in the history he reviews, as well as among current attitudes toward bias as endemic and therefore not to be challenged. Now that Smith has called attention to the unguarded expressions of scholars who were apparently wise enough to be making arguments, but blinded by their biases, we have a very complicated situation of discourse on our hands. What exactly are these men-

tal gymnastics Smith has documented? Will his readers be able to recognize the illicit logics he has uncovered? If so, will that result in silence, more shrewed strategems, or shifts in paradigm? In short, what must happen for *Drudgery Divine* to be heard?

If it is heard, I suspect we will have embarked on a wonderously novel intellectual adventure, one that might be called cultural critique. Has not Smith demonstrated that the Protestant myth is an enculturated phenomenon? And has he not already engaged in cultural critique himself, albeit obliquely by tracing our histories? If so, should his work not make a very big difference in the way in which we talk to each other, not only about myth, ritual, and religion, but about the academy and the times as well? I for one think it should and hope it does.

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Bias in Interpreting Earliest Christianity

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Professor Smith mentions, almost at the end of his challenging book that, “the commonplace limitation of inquiry to the canon, indeed to the notion of *written documents* at all, is an essentially theological determination which must be set aside by the scholar of religion” (p. 113, my italics). I focus, in this brief response, on that particular bias. I do so all the more readily since Smith has himself drawn forceful attention to Graydon Snyder’s fascinating if not stunning book *Ante Pacem*.¹ Here is the problem. The first 150 years of Christianity, say from 30 to 180 CE, are known only from textual or scribal remains. The second 150 years, say from 180 to 313, are known both from scribal and material, textual and plastic remains. But there seems to be an absolutely yawning chasm between the emphases of those latter two sets of remains. If, in other words, one had read all the Christian texts up to say 200 CE and then proposed what one would find on catacomb walls and sarcophagus faces, when such first began to appear, one would be dismally and totally wrong. And if one was that wrong for the second 150 years where one’s expectations could be checked, one would probably have been as wrong for the first 150 years as well—if, that is, such double source materials had been or ever would be available for comparison. How valid, in other words, are

any of our current projections from text to community? For as Snyder emphasizes, but Smith does not, we may well be dealing with the difference between official and scribal as against oral and popular religion and we, as scribal scholars, have favored the former and even read its interests into the latter.

One example will suffice. It is clear from Snyder's total pre-Constantinian inventory, as distinct from all those beautiful but thoroughly misleading books on early Christian art, that the Jonah saga took an extraordinary hold on the Christian imagination which left us those third-century frescoes and sarcophagi. Its three moments, Jonah Cast into the Sea (48 examples), Jonah and the Ketos or Sea-monster (28 examples), and especially Jonah at Rest (42 examples) are numerically so far ahead of the next scenes, Noah in the Ark (8 examples), Daniel in the Lions' Den (6 examples) or the Baptism of Jesus (6 examples) that some very good explanation is compellingly demanded. If we only had that single scene of Jonah being delivered from the sea-beast, we might be able to accept the older explanation that it refers to Matthew 12.40. But, as is shown by the triadic sequence, by the terminal emphasis, and by the numerical preponderance of cases where only that last scene is given, it is especially Jonah at Rest that receives the major emphasis. And, in those images, Jonah is nude, asleep, and very handsome, none of which is mentioned in that terminal scene from the book of Jonah in 4:5-6.

We will never solve that problem as long as we look at it only through the lenses of canonical Christianity. If we turn, however, to contemporary paganism, all becomes at once quite clear. We have about seventy or so Roman sarcophagi adorned with the Endymion myth,² the story of "the fair youth who was visited each night in his magic sleep by the moon goddess, Selene."³ And it is Endymion-as-Jonah or Jonah-as-Endymion that explains that preference for the Jonah saga above all others on Christian sarcophagi. I ask you to pause with me and ponder that act of imagination. Early Christians, at least in the Roman sphere of artistic influence, knew all about the Endymion myth as a beautiful, serene, and consoling image of death (it does not, of course, appear only on male sarcophagi). They must have ransacked their biblical tradition to come up with a—what term do I use—equivalent? And they grasped on to that terminally minor detail in the Jonah story and with sleeping Endymion and resting Jonah as pivot they created a hybrid version, hybrid because, as the pictures in the appendix make clear, Jonah-as-Endymion is nude, asleep, sexually attractive, and there are sheep nearby (from Endymion as shepherd rather than hunter).

In conclusion, therefore, is our exclusive focus on "written documents"

a far greater bias than the one which Smith noted in saying that “*Protestant anti-Catholic apologetics*” underlay not only “the origins of the question of Christian origins” but also underlies “much of our present-day research, with one important alteration, that the characteristics attributed to ‘Popery,’ by the Reformation and post-Reformation controversialists, have been transferred, wholesale to the religions of Late Antiquity” (p. 34)?

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¹ Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem. Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985. See p. 43 for inventory cited in this paper.

² Friedrich Matz, “An Endymion Sarcophagus Rediscovered.” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 15 (1957) 123-128.

³ Marion Lawrence, “Three Pagan Themes in Christian Art.” Pp. 323-334 in Vol. 1 & Plates 1-25 (pp. 100-105) in Vol. II of *De Artibus Opuscula XL. Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*. 2 vols. [text/plates]. Ed. Millard Meiss. New York, NY: New York University Press, 1961. See p. 324.

Mysteries Divine

MARVIN W. MEYER

In his book *Drudgery Divine* Jonathan Z. Smith offers provocative insights into the nature and interpretation of the mystery religions of antiquity and late antiquity. As Smith realizes, these mysteries represent an assemblage of religious traditions with different geographical points of origin, patterns of historical development, and theological orientations, yet they are conventionally compared and classified together under the rubric of mystery religions. The reason for such comparison and classification derives from concerns for resemblance and taxonomy. Smith reminds us that these comparisons do not necessarily tell us how things actually are, but rather they often tell us more about those doing the comparing and their assumptions and perspectives. Smith notes that statements of comparison are “triadic,” with an implicit “more than” and an additional “with respect to.” Thus: A resembles B more than C with respect to N (51-52). Seen in this light, these sorts of statements of comparison are always relative and contextual. It is significant, then, to

observe that much of the ancient comparison and classification of deities, myths, and traditions from the mystery religions occurred in Christian heresiologists like Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus of Rome, Arnobius of Sicca, and Firmicus Maternus, all of whom wrote with Christian apologetic intentions. Hence, these ancient heresiologists may well provide additional confirmation for Smith's thesis that a great deal of the study of the ancient mystery religions, even within the world of early Christianity, has been motivated and shaped by theological concerns.

Smith discusses several aspects of these diverse mystery religions, but he devotes a considerable amount of attention to two items of interest: sacraments and dying-rising deities. The reason for his preoccupation with these matters is obvious. The scholarly agenda in the study of the mystery religions has featured these very sorts of items. Why these issues rather than others from the mysteries are featured in the scholarly literature may not be clear until we recall, with Smith, that the study of the mystery religions has commonly been a comparative enterprise undertaken with an apologetic purpose. The sacramental interests of Christianity and the concerns for the crucified and risen Christ have dictated the agenda for many of those who have turned their attention to the mystery religions. This set of interests becomes more compelling when we trace them to Protestant Reformation and post-Reformation polemics. As Smith puts it, "The same presuppositions, the same rhetorical tactics, indeed, in the main, the very same data exhibited in these early efforts underlie much of our present-day research, with one important alteration, that the characteristics attributed to 'Popery,' by the Reformation and post-Reformation controversialists, have been transferred, wholesale, to the religions of Late Antiquity" (34). Thus, the interpretation of the sacraments (to be or not to be understood as *ex opere operato*) and the centrality of the Pauline notion of dying and rising with Christ dominated discussions among Protestant reformers and also helped set the agenda for the study of the mysteries.

Near the end of *Drudgery Divine* Smith discusses the issue of comparing stories by presenting, as a test case, the theme of dying and rising deities within early Christianity and the mystery religions. Smith quotes one scholar (K. Prümmer) as an example of the Christian apologetic conclusions with regard to this category of dying and rising gods: "the description 'dying and rising gods' is a product of the modern imagination" (100). For, Smith continues, it is maintained by such scholars that the so-called dying-rising deities in the mystery religions—unlike Christ, of course—do not actually rise. They may die, but thereafter they stay where they belong, that is, dead. To this contention we may respond by enumerating

several examples of deities from the mystery religions who may not rise or be resurrected in a Christian sense but who still provide in their deaths and lives hints of the continuation of life or the manifestation of new life. For example (here we ignore matters of dating), Osiris may not actually rise, but he does exist in the realm of the dead as the ruler of that realm, and such objects as the “grain Osiris” may proclaim more graphically the growth (rebirth?) of grain and the power of Osiris. When Lucius is initiated into the mysteries of Isis, according to Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* 11.23-24, he undergoes a nocturnal death experience by passing through the realm of death—the realm of Osiris—and emerging, dressed like the rising sun, to celebrate his initiation, “as if it were a birthday,” in the morning. Again, Kore may not actually rise, but she returns mythically to the land of the living from her yearly sojourn in the underworld. It is not a surprise to hear Marcus say, in Cicero’s *De legibus* 2.14.36, “we have learned from them (that is, the mysteries, meaning the Eleusinian mysteries) the fundamentals of life (*principia vitae*) and have grasped the basis not only for living with joy but also for dying with a better hope.” Once again, the Mithraic bull may not actually rise, but archeological monuments such as a stone carved in bas-relief from Heddernheim, Germany, show heads of grain growing from the dying bull, perhaps as a manifestation of life in the face of death—or, more precisely, life in the tail of death. Yet again, Attis may not actually rise, but, according to Arnobius of Sicca’s *Adversus nationes* 5.7, after his death a concession was granted, “that his body should not decay, that his hair should ever grow, that the very smallest of his fingers should live and alone react by continued motion.” We may add to these examples the related observation that specific mention of rebirth is made in Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*, the Mithraic inscriptions from Santa Prisca, and an inscription of 376 C.E. on the *taurobolium* and *criobolium*, while the so-called Mithras Liturgy refers to one who is to be transformed by “immortal birth” and is to be “born again in thought.”

Why such hints of the emergence of new life have not been satisfactory in the eyes of some scholars as evidence for the rising of the divine within the mystery religions stems, I would maintain, from the very bias that Smith addresses throughout his book: the standard for describing what is worthy of being called a rising or resurrected deity is derived from the Christian notion of the rising or resurrected Christ, as understood in, say, Paul. The use of such a standard indicates a scholarly choice that is motivated by theological concerns and that is made from among the options available within early Christianity for interpreting the resurrection and ongoing life of the living Christ. (I note here, parenthetically,

another of the options, one that is remarkably different from the dying-rising paradigm: the Gospel of Thomas also proclaims “the living Jesus,” but this figure lives on through life-giving sayings to be interpreted by people with insight, and has nothing to do with dying-rising interests understood in a more Pauline sense.) In short, Smith’s test case confirms the need to be mindful of the underlying motives that may mold and shape our decidedly value-laden scholarship.

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A SOCIOLOGY OF SACRED TEXTS

*An International Conference held at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne,
England, July 1991*

JON DAVIES

Summary

In 1992 Sheffield Academic Press will publish a selection of the papers given at this Conference, which was held in Newcastle in July 1991. The Conference was organized by the Department of Religious Studies at Newcastle University. The Head of the Department at the time was Professor John Sawyer. The publication will be edited by the new Head of the Department, Jon Davies, and by Isabel Wollaston, currently a British Academy Post Doctoral Fellow at Oxford. Two of our students—Carol Charlton and Michael Burke—worked extra hours to make sure the organisation functioned. Our thanks are due to them and to all participants.

This article is in part a summary of the Conference and of those papers which will appear in the book. It is also a contribution in its own right to an understanding of the relationships between the social sciences [sociology and anthropology] and theology. Several cross-cutting social, personal and professional loyalties can, and often do create degrees of distance, dispute and misunderstanding between the two disciplines. As it happens, this Conference managed to find a respectable acreage of common ground; but it is perhaps useful to mention some of the possible areas of controversy, if only because any future conference will probably have to deal with them more directly than we chose to! Readers will of course realise that the book is still being prepared and that the papers discussed here may well be altered or added to.

The premise of this article is that all "TEXTS", be they sacred or secular, ancient or modern, canonical or provisional, are the products of human social transactions, a human context, with all that this means for the processes of text-creation and the business of conscious, purposeful, fallible, writing and editing. Texts and contexts change together; and change each other.

CONFERRING ABOUT SACRED TEXTS

1. WHAT is the text? WHO is the text?

The proposition that the meaning of a text is to be looked for nowhere other than in the text itself was fairly firmly stated by Jacob Neusner at the start of our conference: Professor Neusner said that the documents he dealt with were: *collective, anonymous, authoritative, proclaimed*: and that, said

Professor Neusner was his basic position. Clearly, if it is not possible to ask WHO is the text?, then a sociology of sacred texts is unattainable.

Sociology is a Who? question: and it is only when the abstract notion of "Society" is empiricised and treated as a "*WHO IS SOCIETY?*" problem, that we can begin to construct a useful, differentiated sociology of religion—or religions.

In the same way, sociologists must respect the differentiations of the world's theologies—"religion" must be seen as *empirically present in the world* as a variety of theologies.

The Marxist dismissal of the internalities of theological differences, the lumping together of all religion as essentially being nothing more than the "opiate of the masses, the heart of a heartless world", makes a textual focus on scriptural and religious differences as uninteresting as it is sterile. Much of the "sociology of religion" follows a marxist path in that it is basically concerned not so much with explaining religions as with explaining religion away. From a marxist point of view all religious thought is epiphenomenal and not to be taken seriously in and on its own terms, that is on terms which present it as something both authentically ontological *and* historically constructed. [Freud, although from a very different metaphysic, tends to the same basic attitude as Marx]. The "WHAT is the text?" is as irrelevant from a crude Marxist point of view as is the "WHO is the text?" from Neusner's point of view: and both "sides" pass each other by conversing, if they converse at all, by shouting into each other's mouths.

In fact, of course, neither side really spends too long defending a purist position—theologians like Neusner [see below] in essence know that texts arise in [social] context: and subtle Marxists like the historian Christopher Hill are endlessly aware of the subtleties of the transformations of "Religion" into "Religions", and of religions into varying forms of social action. In this area, of course, no one is more visibly enmeshed than Max Weber.

2. Max Weber—true guide or false prophet?

No conference on sociology and religion is ever complete without the presence of Max Weber: and two of our published papers are particularly concerned with his contribution. Weber very clearly took religion and religions seriously; indeed, he saw the modern world as being profoundly affected by the theological texts and formularies of early and modern religious systems; the differences between them are presented as in some way explaining the differences in modern social and economic life—on the

global scale. Yet while for some scholars Weber is a bridge over troubled waters, to others he is a source both of obfuscation and error: Weber, insisted Prof. Michael Pye, was wrong about Japan, for example. Lauren Pfister's paper [on the Confucian canon] indicates that Weber got China wrong as well. In sum, rather large errors!

The very ambition of Weber to find the origins of the world's modernity in the discrete theologies of the world's religions lays him very wide open indeed to the charge that his understanding of those theologies was determined more by an urge to construct a secular sociological system than by a proper respect for theology itself—or, rather, of theologies themselves. On the other hand, to dismiss Weber entirely is to dismiss the very task of trying to relate religious and secular change within the context of the history and structure of modernity, a modernity which has now to be imagined on a global scale.

The study of the worlds' religions is not the same as the study of religions in the world: and unless *that* is studied with the intensity that Weber brought to it, "religion" will simply be invoked as some kind of free-floating plastic porridge called on to fill up gaps left by more persuasive, and persuasively secular theories of the world system. To some extent this tension between the social sciences and theology is reflected in and given sharper edge by certain aspects of the personal and professional career trajectories of the two scholarly traditions of sociology and theology.

3. Faith—expressed or analysed?

Sociologists tend to be atheists: or, to put it in another way, sociology tends to look for "causes" of faith in this worldly locations. Sociologists tend not to go to church—which is why, as one of our contributors pointed out, they have not been very interested in contemporary liturgy and litany, paradoxically deriving most of their knowledge from a theology they can read about rather than from observations of ritual behaviour to which they have to go and in which they have to participate. The "secularisation" thesis of sociology provides a reason for defining religious faith as a peripheral and about-to-vanish style of social action—a style, that is of social action which does not have to be taken seriously except in the sense of being able to seriously wish it Goodbye. Generally speaking, sociologists live in a secular world. They do not experience the religious life as life.

Many if not most theologians are believers: whatever the proximate and this-worldly causes of this or that theology, they believe in the real and true Cause—the God inaccessible to the questionnaires of sociology, but

more or less straightforwardly available in churches, chapels, synagogues and temples. Theologians, for personal as well as professional reasons, are perfectly comfortable with religious language—"May God go with you" is a readily acceptable form of farewell in gatherings of theologians, be they from educational or ecclesiastical institutions. Above all, theologians speak the language of Truth—or at least of the Seeking after Truth, with even their tentative truths held in trust for the larger Truth. They are not, therefore, too readily comfortable with the radically corrosive relativities of sociology. No "Inter-Faith" gathering can be harder to handle than one which includes a "No-Faith" faction. No ecumenical dialogue can be harder to sustain than one with infidels.

4. *Common ground*

The conference could, then, have become yet another example of loud talking by the adamantly deaf. Yet it didn't. To some extent oblivion [see below] helped in as much as few of the participants were simply sociologists; most of them were theologians or social scientists of an anthropological bent—of which more below. Sociology was present at the gathering more in the role of bridesmaid than of bride: folklorists tell us that bridesmaids appear at weddings, surrounding the bride and dressed very like her, to provide a distraction to the devil, whose appearance at weddings is made so much more likely than at ordinary times because of the enhanced sexual lubricity implicit in the wedding ceremony. The ceremony cannot take place without the bridesmaids—but they are not the main objects of attention, although one of them [Max Weber?] is signalled out at the end of the service when the bride [now safely wife] openly passes on the temptations and opportunities of fecundity to one of her chance-chosen attendants.

If sociology was the bridesmaid, slightly off centre-stage, then the fruitful couple were theology and anthropology—an anthropology of sacred texts was what we produced, with Emile Durkheim, Arnold van Gennep, George Tyrrell and Mircea Eliade and Bronislaw Malinowski providing the essential view of Sacredness as being both expressed in and created by a ritual process, which is itself in turn re-created and re-expressed in the elaboration of sacred liturgies [the texts of praxis] and litanies: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Sacred texts are the product of active praying; praying is the creation of text. Sacred texts are how people write stories for each other in the presence of God.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the emergence of this theoretical focus it is very necessary, in my view, to address the matter of "Absent Friends"—i.e. of the impact on the Conference [on all social gatherings,

convivial or purposeful?] of the contributors who couldn't come. In "His Majesty's Declaration" which precedes the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England, the Monarch refers to "the Advice of so many of our Bishops *as might conveniently be called together*" [my emphasis]; and in this rather casual way the Monarch then deals with "the curious and unhappy differences" of theological controversy in his realm. There is a sociology of Conference Texts!

5. *Absent texts: the sociology of oblivion*

Organising a conference, and the publication of its proceedings, provides an object lesson in how "TEXTS" become constructed and promulgated. Attendance at a conference [in Britain or elsewhere] can be as much a function of the cost of getting to it as proficiency in the subject matter; and entry into the "canon" [the published papers of the conference] can be determined as much by such factors as access to a fax machine or facility in the language of publication as by excellence of content. The initial "call for papers" will elicit conditional offers from various parts of the world—offers conditional, that is, upon things like the availability of financial assistance for travel and subsistence: and the very broadcasting of the "call for papers" may itself be conditioned by the nature and efficiency of the broadcasting "equipment" at one end and the receiving equipment at the other—Universities will tend to "talk" to other Universities, and formal institutions to other formal institutions.

It is certainly the case that our conference would have been very different—there would have been more people from the Third World? and more women?—had we been able to respond to all offers of papers and all expressions of interest: and it would have been even more different had we been able to tap in some representative way into the *full* flood, the whole centrifugal inchoate culture of the religious life of the world!

It is perhaps some consolation to play with the idea that all of the great sacred texts of the world are to a greater or lesser extent similarly the product of the random workings of topography, language, border-control and economics; these are the texts of accident as well as the texts of God; and Who was unable to come? is as much a part of what was said/not said as the Why or the reason they couldn't come—to Nicea or Newcastle, pardon the presumption.

6. *Ritual—myth and lex orandi*

Sacred texts, in even the most Revelation-oriented faith, have human Messengers even when they have Divine authors. [Not all Messengers are

human, of course]. There can be no debate in an academic conference about the *Truth* of Divine authorship: the faithfulness of Faith simply should not be on the agenda.

Messages and Messengers, however, are not in the same position. They may well have an opaque [to the rest of us] relationship with the Divine author; but they have—indeed, must, by definition, have—open communication with the rest of us. This transaction, or inter-relationship, is amenable to discussion—i.e. to sociological analysis: even Professor Neusner imported an anthropology-sociology into his paper when contrasting the social and political position of the compilers of the Bavli with that of the compilers of the Bible, he said “thought proceeds always in a context... and context is always social.”

What, then, is “the social”? Sociology will always over-complicate the answer to this question—probably because the contexts they confront are hugely complex and too close to the observer to be see-able. Anthropologists, dealing with smaller-scale empirical realities, and often standing some distance away from them, can and do see “the social” as something reasonably homogeneous. This view of the world, or more properly the world viewed in this way, puts in perspective the hugely complicating sociological understanding of religion as something essentially ideological. A sociology of theology-as-ideology is a huge task. In contrast, anthropologists can genuinely see religion as natural, as something more or less spontaneously adopted by the populace and as something locating that populace at and as the actively created centre of what their culture regards as Holy: indeed, what they regard as Holy *is* the Holy.

This is a concept of religion which in both theoretical and empirical work ties in with the notion *lex orandi lex credendi*—although inevitably George Tyrrell’s complex treatment of this theme will have to be simplified.¹ At the theoretical level, this enables us to see religion not so much as high theology, expressed in the “anonymous” texts referred to by Neusner, but as something located in the ritual or liturgical practices of real, identifiable social groups; religion is what they do, as they do it, as they act it, as they pray it: it is what it does, it does what it is. In anthropology “the vernacular” would be what most of the people do most of the time—and in pre-literate cultures, there is no other way of “knowing” what religion is other than asking the actors what it is they are doing, an inquiry which is itself only possible via observation of the enactment of the ritual.

In the kinds of societies anthropologists study there will be a relatively low level of “distancing” between popular and professional theologies: strictly speaking there is no “vernacular” religion in homogeneous

societies because there are no fundamental antagonistic social divisions. In contemporary societies, “vernacular” denotes forms of religion which arise spontaneously—within a more general culture, perhaps, but free of ideological manipulation by superordinate self-interested elites. Vernacular religion is both popular religion and a religion which is created anew, over and against institutionalised tradition.

There is, then, a relatively clear guideline to our conference in the connection between *lex orandi lex credendi* and the idea of the vernacular. Let us see how people pray what they believe in; and let us seek to know what they believe in by seeing how they pray.

Within the general categories of ritual behaviour, anthropology also provides us with the concept of myth, an equally complex matter. In the religious sense myth is at one end of the elaboration of belief. If there is, in every religion, an axiomatic Truth, which is outside Time [and best left alone at Conferences of this type!], then History is the story of the attempts by the Messengers to tell us that Truth, i.e. *History is the story both of the Messengers and of their Messages*. Over time, History becomes Legend, stories which both simplify and complicate History: and in turn Legend becomes Myth, a proposition arising out of a narrative, but expressing the story as invariant but myriad truths, faces and mirrors of the Truth. Myths are symbolic exaggerations of Legends, which are in turn exaggerations of History: Messengers and Messages are received as and into myth—but are then faced about to re-see the Truth.

Myths may be written down, or given some form of formal depiction: but they are *experienced* as ritual, as enactment; they are drama, subject to production and reproduction: and therefore capable of being at the same time the tradition of Tradition and the tradition of the New. Myths are enactments, the praying into being of new sacralisations, introduced perhaps as heresies, defended as new orthodoxies, handed on as ancient truths. They may begin as lived-in chaos: they are progenitive systems of action because they are multi-valent: and they may seem to be a garble of signposts loosely and separately hinged to a weather-vane, pointing always to a choice of routes and rarely to a fixed and limited purpose. There are no systematic or completed mythologies; but there is myth-making, in private prayer and public praying: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. B. Malinowski says this of myth:

Myth is not symbolic, but [is] a direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth... expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for

the guidance of man.... Myth is... an indispensable ingredient of all culture. It is everywhere constantly regenerated... Myth is a constant by-product of living faith, which is in need of miracles: of sociological status, which demands precedent; of moral rule, which requires sanction.²

As the published papers will show, this focus seemed to provide a way of “organising” many [but not all] of the papers presented over the three days of the Conference. Other, and very large, issues remain—avoided rather, than dealt with, perhaps! The “Max Weber Problematic” sits there glowering away—a huge vessel with enough holes in its hull to sink it twice, but still doggedly churning on into the theological and historical billows. The matter of religion in contemporary society—secular on top, but subterraneously sacred?—was addressed fairly directly; and there were several excellent papers on the creation of new “sacred texts”. It will not be possible to publish all the papers in the forthcoming volume: the next section of this article summarises and comments on the articles which will most probably be published.

THE CONFERENCE PAPERS

Jacob Neusner’s paper contrasts the editorial and didactic style of Bible and Bavli. Neusner’s work is already very well known, in particular for the huge range and ubiquity of his textual scholarship. Needless to say, his presence at the Conference gave it an excellent start.

My own paper is about war memorials. These, I argue, can be seen as “lapidary texts”, a widespread European sacred text whose essential meaning is probably the most commonly understood of all European symbols: which European does not understand the meaning of “1914-1918”?

These lapidary texts, I argue, are the monumental expression of the central drama of Christianity—the “vernacular” religion of Europe—i.e. of the drama of the betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; the mythic content of the war memorials and of war remembrance re-enacts that drama. In a very real way these ubiquitous war memorials map out—spatially, spiritually and theologically—the boundaries of “Europe”, Europe is defined by war and war remembrance.

That same war—a rather “triumphant” war for Christians—has very different meanings for Jews: and the other two pieces in this section are on Jewish attempts to memorialise the story and the terror of Hitler’s war upon the Jews. Isabel Wollaston analyses a range of Holocaust Testimony, and suggests that these texts have become a new sacred text for Jews, a text in which they seek to proclaim a version of what the War was for Europe’s Jews. Both Isabel Wollaston and Jonathan Webber [who

writes in particular about the controversies involved in creating a memorial at and for Auschwitz] emphasise the essential multi-valent nature of monuments as sacred texts: there is, at the very heart of central Europe as it seeks to face up to the terrible events which took place there, an almost metaphysical agony in the task of turning memory into monument. Myths can be and remain usefully ambivalent in their meaning: the explications and objectifications required by monuments invite a potent dispute about the history and moral meanings to which they point: aesthetic arguments invoke whole cosmologies and mighty pedigrees: and Wollaston and Webber locate these “textual disputes” in the Holocaust and Auschwitz—the centre of Europe’s tormented soul.

In sum then the three pieces in Section One of the forthcoming book address very directly the problem of understanding the process whereby people, in creating new public monuments of war, death and suffering, both draw on and re-order the inherited or “established” theologies of European culture. The culture is much older, of course, than the events the monuments try to deal with—although to some extent the events are themselves re-plays of earlier experiences.

The three contributions in the next section of the book analyse the role of Prayer—or, more properly, the act of Praying, in the lives of three disparate cultures: the Nahua Indians of Mexico, villagers of southern Italy, and villagers of southern Hungary. The authors [Alessandro Lupo, Patrizia Burdi, and Iren Lovasz] are linguists as well as field-workers; they analyse, therefore, the way in which prayers—again, more properly PRAYING—is constructed into the daily concerns of ordinary people out of a large and often semi-invisible reservoir of popular or vernacular theologies: thus Lovasz’s Priest-informant says that he has no great worries about the superstitious nature of the Prayers of many of his flock because “what counts is that these prayers help keep the feeling of remorse alive, and they come to me to confess anyway”. Burdi traces the pedigree of a “Powerful and Perilous Text”—a semi-pagan medical Almanac—back through centuries of Christianity to much more ancient [pre-Christian] Egyptian religions, which she traces to southern Italy via journeys of merchants, slaves, and soldiers moving from Delos and Sicily, bringing with them as they did the Osiris stories of Alexandria; these stories, in talismanic form, are then re-mobilised by twentieth-century Italians in order to cope with their felt vulnerability in the face of illness and distress. On the other side of the world, the peasants of the Sierra de Puebla in Mexico re-order a whole range of oral prayers and praying traditions to create for themselves, for crises as they happen, a mythical cosmology and theology which invites the benign concern of a whole range

of transcendental potentates and powers. In one prayer a Nahua therapist enlists the assistance of a very extensive range of co-therapists, from pre-columbian to Christian and from sacred to profane: he prays for help to the “world of earth and water, flat earth, to Most Holy Trinity, to Saint John Crescentious God, to Mother of mine ancestress of Talocan, to Jesus Christ of Talocan, to Town Council of Talocan, and to Policeman of Talocan”.

As one can imagine, this praying praxis is highly adaptable—whether in Italy, Hungary or Mexico: they are traditional, but innovatory; practical, but other-worldly; general, but personal; public, but capable of being internalised; and ritualised, but spontaneous. In them, perhaps, Christianity can be seen as a rather recent addition to a massive archaeology of religious belief and practice, an addition subsumed into cultures which will probably regard themselves as in some sense being “colonised” by the relatively new religion of the Christians.

A point which strikes the reader of this kind of anthro-theological fieldwork is the capacity of Catholic Christianity to make itself comfortable with what are arguably pagan heresies: Catholicism has always been, of course, as much a religion of ritual as a religion of the book; and for this reason, perhaps, is much more able than the later Protestantism [with their anxious efforts to locate a monopoly of authority in *THE BOOK*] to lie down comfortably with earlier ritual practices.

In the third section of the book two of our contributors [Mark Chapman, Lauren Pfister] deal explicitly with Max Weber; while the third [Kathleen Thomas], in her analysis of the various formulations of the Quaker Book of Discipline, by implication follows a Weberian line in relating theological to social changes. Mark Chapman’s essay on the early twentieth century Chicago Divinity School, headed by Shailer Mathews, is an analysis of another form of “action theology”, as the leading academic divines of the great and greatly turbulent city of Chicago tried to apply their religious beliefs to the social problems of one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Like so many academics who step forth into the political market place, Shailer had to confront the question posed by Max Weber: “Which of the warring Gods are we to serve?”—the self-evidently successful capitalist God of Individualism, or the God of the Beatitudes? For Weber the essential tragedy of the West—its Iron Cage—lay in the fact that nothing other than the power of the market seemed to be involved in the formulation of the answer to that question: money procured the theology it wanted, and the moral prescriptions of a religion which originated in notions of “Community” were forced further and further back into a kind of privatised bemusement, watching in hor-

ror the huge success of capitalism in creating an engine of seemingly endless material profusion. In Chicago, academics in both the Divinity School and in the great School of Sociology sought to derive from their two disciplines an ethic of Community, of co-operative civic practices to contend with the evident victims of the great onrushing potencies of urbanisation and proletarianisation represented in the growth of Chicago: they essentially failed; Mayor Daley succeeded.

From the other side of the world, Lauren Pfister of the Hong Kong Baptist College, provided the conference with a detailed analysis of Max Weber's Confucian and Puritan forms of rationalism: Weber was of the view that Confucianism, as expressed in the traditions of Imperial China's intellectual class, had a quietist rationality, leading to "rational adjustment to the world", whereas Puritanism [as exemplified in Chicago?] was either committed to or led to "rational mastery of the world". Pfister shows that the relationship between Confucian doctrines and practices, and their inter-actions with the State, did indeed produce a "Canon" with clear [but varying] sociological functions: at the very least, it would be hard to imagine the Empire being quite so long-lived had Calvin gone to Peking rather than Geneva! In China, Sacred texts and civil service etiquette clearly worked for the State: and Pfister's essay shows not only how text and etiquette informed and transformed each other over the history of the Empire, but also how the very business of translating those texts *for the benefit of the West* was itself in part determined by the concerns and interests of the newly-dominant Western empires of Europe and America. These trans-cultural imperial interests, inside and outside China, created a kind of "league table" of canonical texts, with periodic promotions and demotions, and the occasional relegation. This is clearly not a finished process.

Kathleen Thomas's work immediately puts us onto a very different scale; Quakers are few in number—perhaps 200 000 in the world. As a Civil-War derived sect [the "English" Civil War that is], the Quakers have an archive founded in the era of the printing press; and as an unusually methodical people they have texts, semi-canonical if not sacred, which are changed to the accompaniment of carefully stated reasons: little needs to be tendentiously inferred from or imputed to the text-changers of the Religious Society of Friends. Kathleen Thomas's paper charts the steady alteration in substance and style of a religious movement gradually abandoning the stance of being "in the world but not of it". Sacred texts, as insisted-upon Truths, are the boundary markers of religious groups, the available "test" of membership: and as boundary markers they will change their canonical status as the group comes to regard the very

maintenance of boundaries as being more of a hindrance than a help, or as the group members come to feel less threatened by “the world”. This paper raises at least two interesting questions: is it, contrary to common sense, perhaps easier to change a written text than to change an oral tradition?; and do sacred texts which are changed in order to make accommodations with the world thereby lose their social as well as sacred function?

Our final section contains contributions from two of the [too few] female contributors to our conference, Rosalind Hackett from the University of Tennessee, and Linda Anderson from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Rosalind Hackett’s essay is an empirical account of the use made of the Bible by women in Pentecostal and other churches in Southern Nigeria—and the branches of these churches in Europe and the USA. Africa, under colonial regimes and under independent governments, has seen the efflorescence of a huge variety of churches and denominations, many of them indigenous but many of them the subject of missionary interest from a new breed of American evangelical proselytizing: the age of Mission is far from over! At whatever “mix” of church life one looks, in Nigeria or else where, men continue to dominate the “official” positions—but Hackett shows that women are able to see in the Bible a sacred text which they can reconstruct in their own way. This way, Hackett points out, tends to be conservative-evangelical; this is not a kind of radical feminist liberation theology, but it is a challenge to male ecclesiastical practice simply because it is a Bible mobilised by and for women; and she notes the growing strength of the Association of African Women Theologians.

The interesting sociological question is this: will “marginal” groups [not necessarily, note, *minority* groups] tend to adopt and adapt as sacred texts those writings which are conservative rather than radical because such texts are more likely to serve a successful tactical political purpose? Or is it perhaps the case that “marginal” groups [“marginal” in italics because it is so odd to use such a term to apply to over one half of the world’s population!] will seek to end their marginalisation by adopting the orthodoxy of established theologies in order to mask the truer radical nature of their quest—the erosion of the power of male text producers? The great continuity in the story of our sacred texts is gender: all sacred texts are texts of men, and they can only be changed [for better or for worse] by challenging the power of men.

Linda Anderson’s paper is also about the life of women, of women re-defining the sacred and the spiritual so that it speaks to of and from the story of women—women as experiencers of the cruel triumphant sorrows of Africa, America and Europe, tied together by slavery and the slave

trade. In Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, Anderson finds a transcendent text, a presentation of history as a sought-for atonement ["at one with"] in the making-visible of repressed and forgotten meanings and histories; these sacred texts-in-the making are dependent for their appeal on serious listening, not recitation, because the depth of the repression is such as to remove the possibility of formal re-cited text. No sociology of sacred texts will ever understand those texts unless it builds in *ab initio* the image of the millions of women, in Christianising-Europe and in slave-trading America and Africa, whose descendants are now so insistent that no text is sacred and no change benign which ignores either the witness of that history or the prior right of the daughters and granddaughters of slavery to put that history right—and the concomitant duty of men to [for once!] listen while their texts are being corrected on them. Max Weber had troubles enough in his life-time; and he was, I think, busy on a good task; but he was never an African mother on a slave boat, and that is that.

The conference had other papers; and plenty of serious discussion; and lots of laughs. We were alway conscious of people who couldn't come—from China, India and parts of Europe; and those English-only speakers amongst us were again forced to address the issue of the problematic privileges of hegemonic text-selectivity which this language confers—or imposes. "THE HEGEMONIC PROBLEM" runs through all discussions of sacred texts—the hegemonies of race, class and gender. Another conference may well be able to deal more extensively with this issue than we did.

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¹ George Tyrrell, *Lex Credendi*, Longmans, 1906.

² Bronislaw Malinowski, "Myth in Primitive Psychology", pp. 73 and 118, in *The Frazer Lectures*, edited by W.R. Dawson, MacMillan, 1932.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMENTARIES

Reply to Masefield

FRANK J. HOFFMAN

Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism (RMEB) has received several glowing reviews from leading scholars of demonstrated philosophical talent and Indological expertise. In NUMEN, by contrast, Masefield's nearly libelous review of my book for a history of religions readership appears as an anomalous aberration written by someone with neither philosophical training nor talent.

Since Masefield has made such a mess of things, it is necessary, first, to summarize the work for the benefit of NUMEN readers who can learn so little about it by reading his review. For that purpose, there is no better concise statement than that by Ellison Findly (Trinity College, CT) who says of it:

A study of some of the major philosophical issues in early Buddhism as seen from both the emic (internal) and etic (external) points of view. Basing his analysis upon material from the five Nikayas of the Pali canon, the author moves expertly between the critically philosophical and technically contextual approaches to examine several problematic areas of the tradition. He argues persuasively against the charges of unintelligibility and pessimism in early Buddhism, and he shows how rebirth is part of the background against which other beliefs in the tradition are seen as true by believers. He further argues against Buddhism as a form of empiricism, as meaning in the tradition is not bound to the unfalsifiability of its doctrine. Finally, in showing that "the deathless" is neither a transcendental state nor extinction, the author makes a claim for "eternal life" not in conflict with the anatta doctrine. Although fairly technical and closely argued, this study has useful notes and bibliography to support its argument, and it would be appropriate for upper-division undergraduates as well as for graduate students. (*Choice*)

Secondly (now that NUMEN readers know what the book is about), we may turn to Masefield's review. I have not the space, time, nor inclination to pursue those of Masefield's allegations and objections that are merely frivolous (knows no Pali), unintelligible ("All this, just so they wouldn't know they were dead when they died"), or already addressed by greater minds than Masefield's (etymology of *sacchikatvā*). In Masefield's review of my RMEB for NUMEN Vol. XXXVI Fasc. 1 (June 1989) he makes many sarcastic, some unsubstantiated, some false, and a few just malicious claims about my book. Masefield claims, *inter alia*, that:

(1) Hoffman pretends to answer “all those irksome imponderables that have been troubling Buddhist scholars for more than a century” (pp. 135-136).

This is a misrepresentation with Masfield playing fast and loose with fact. Nowhere is it said that the book is set forth as a philosophical panacea for all the problems of Buddhist scholarship. (Philosophical works are by their very nature never definitive in the way that descriptive works may attempt to be definitive.) The book is, in the words of John Koller (Rensselaer), “a fine philosophical essay” (*Journal of Indian Philosophy*).

(2) “The Hoffman method” involves simplification, isolation, misquotation, misconstrual so as to criticize, establishing one’s own superior position (136).

This is almost too silly to reply to, and since Masfield supplies no example the point may be discounted. We may just notice the words of Paul Griffiths (Chicago) about RMEB: “it is exegetically careful, lucidly written, and philosophically interesting. And, in the field of Buddhist studies, a work with any of these virtues is rare: one with all three should be read with care” (*Eastern Buddhist*).

(3) sully household names in Buddhism (136).

Again, Masfield misrepresents the intention of the work, perhaps because he does not understand that it is in the nature of a philosophical approach to make reasoned objections to positions considered. Indeed, this whole line of criticism on this point rings rather hollow from a mouth like Masfield’s that is capable of viciously attacking even the established Pali scholar, George Bond (Northwestern), in *Journal of the Institute for Religion and Culture* (Kokushikan University, Japan).

(4) ignores thirteen of the fifteen books of the *Khuddakanikāya* (136).

This is simply irrelevant, since it is not incumbent upon me to consider each and every book of the fifth *Nikaya*. It is sufficient that Roger Jackson (Carleton) thinks that, despite particular areas of disagreement, my book is a lasting contribution that everyone doing philosophical studies of Pali Buddhism will need to take into account in the future (*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*).

(5) Buddhhadatta definitive (136).

I certainly do not conclude simply on the basis that there is nothing in Buddhhadatta’s dictionary, therefore the Buddhists do not have a certain concept. This is one consideration in a larger argument. (See RMEB pp. 11-24.)

(6) faulty method: “His contention that he is expounding the content of the *Nikāyas* without reference to the commentaries (p. 5) rings rather hollow without some way of demonstrating that the translations he uses contain no silent commentarial interpolations” (136).

If one sets out to study a set of texts, it is no reasonable objection to say that one cannot claim to be doing so because the texts are not pristine and may have interpolations. I have already admitted that the texts may have interpolations (RMEB p. 1), but this is no obstacle. If Masfield believes that it is an obstacle, then the burden of proof is on him to show that this *kind* of study (*i.e.*, a textually based, philosophical one similar to the work of Jayatilleke *et al.*) is impossible.

Masfield falsely alleges, in effect, that the scope of the work is both grandiloquently wide and arbitrarily narrow, thereby mimicking Richard Gombrich's view of Ergardt in NUMEN XXVI Fasc. 2, December 1979. In fact, however, Richard Gombrich (as an external examiner) approved the dissertation on which RMEB is based as publishable University of London material. Ergo, Masfield's mimicry is misplaced.

(7) absurd, some might say blasphemous conclusions (137).

What "some might say" is "blasphemous" is neither here nor there. I have already argued against such loose imputations of "blasphemy" in *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* (Stirling University, 1983) and in *Sophia* (Deakin University, 1989).

(8) "foisting the ideas of his doctoral supervisor onto the Buddhist summum bonum in the last chapter" (137).

This is one of Masfield's most telling assertions—against himself—for it shows that he has no understanding of how, occasionally, by the sensitive employment (rather than wholesale imposition) of distinctions from contemporary philosophy, the logical structure of the Buddhist view can be clarified. In the words of David Bastow (Dundee): "The final chapter is the most effective of the book. It argues against Masfield's merging of the concepts of *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna*; and proposes a sophisticated interpretation of 'deathless' as applied to the latter" (*Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*). Masfield's problem is that he is unable to see any logical structure or rationality to early Buddhism, and, like the well-frog, supposes there is no ocean beyond.

(9) "Buddhism may consider itself lucky that it has so far been spared what philosophers of religion have apparently been doing for Christianity; whilst true Buddhist scholars will no doubt prefer their present obstacles to Hoffman's imposed solutions".

To this silliness the words of A.L. Herman (Wisconsin) about my book are an apt response: "This is a fine presentation of some of the major problems, questions and issues relating to early Buddhism. It is carried out with the pertinent Pali texts and the author's own translations within his discussion together with the current literature relating to all of the matters discussed" (*Asian Thought and Society*). Likewise, after a careful and

critical review, Roger Jackson (Carleton) concludes: “I cannot conceive that any further discussions of the philosophical standpoint of early Buddhism (or even Buddhism as a whole) could proceed without reference to his book” (*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*).

In his vehement and mostly mistaken criticisms, Masfield has not answered the specific objection set in my book about his conflation of the distinction between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* (see RMEB pp. 109-112). He has taken umbrage at my disagreeing with him about the soundness of one of his specific arguments, failing to respond to the point. The reason for this is not far to seek. As even his sympathetic critic, Jonathan Harrison, points out in his NUMEN review of Masfield’s *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, logically speaking, Masfield’s work is unconvincing.

Since Masfield has made it appear that RMEB is complete rubbish, the cautious reader should sift the facts carefully. In the end NUMEN readers should ask, which is more likely: that the Oxford Sanskritist, the Jesuit scholar, and the London Professor who approved the dissertation on which the work is based, as well as the numerous reviewers who hold that RMEB is a worthwhile book are all mistaken, or that Masfield has a bee in his bonnet?

Again, since Masfield tries to pretend that my book is totally devoid of merit (whereas I had previously only objected to his view of *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna*), he deserves the following candid response to his work in general: Masfield pretends to be in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Buddhist studies when, in fact, he is very much on an isolated fringe of it. He has found neither philosophers nor Buddhist monks generally receptive to his theological talk about “divine revelation” and “grace” (the latter is a mistranslation by Masfield of *saddhā* and *anuggaha* in Buddhism). What he has very likely found in the “Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies” (a group unknown to “true Buddhist scholars” to boomerang one of Masfield’s favorite phrases) is a group of pro-Christian sympathizers credulous enough to offer a subvention for what Allen and Unwin would otherwise probably never publish. Indeed, Masfield’s own inability to do credible, philosophically interesting work in the field of Asian thought is surpassed only by his frequently demonstrated ability to personally alienate serious scholars. If a Buddha were to look upon Masfield’s perverse “work” and his criticisms of others as unfounded as they are vicious, then Mara would delight in tempting that Buddha to despair, so difficult would it be for that Buddha to remain cool.

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Reply to F.J. Hoffman

PETER MASEFIELD

Although Hoffman promised the editors of this Journal that his response to my review would “focus on the issues, and be stimulating for [its] readers without indulging in personal diatribe,” I nonetheless detect, reading between the lines, that he does not altogether like me.

This is a pity, for I have no feelings one way or another towards him as a person, just as I do not have anything to say on any work of his other than the book under review, including the doctoral thesis upon which it is supposed to be based. But his book I do not like, because of its lack of concern with matters of factual detail, as well as the talent it exhibits for misquoting, misconstruing and misrepresenting the works of others, which blemishes also permeate his response.

Thus it comes as no surprise to find him saying, in his response, of my failure to address his objection to my “conflation of the distinction between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna*” that:

“The reason for this is not hard to seek. As even his sympathetic critic, Jonathan Harrison, points out in his review (in *NUMEN*) of Masefield’s *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, logically speaking, Masefield’s work is unconvincing.”

Passing aside the observation that the author of the review (in *NUMEN* XXXIV 1987 pp. 256-264) was *Paul*, rather than *Jonathan*, Harrison, one may nonetheless note the absence of any page reference for the passage concerned. This is just as well, since there exists no passage in which the word ‘unconvincing’ appears.

‘Convincing’ does appear in two places, though neither passage bears any resemblance to Hoffman’s attempted paraphrase in terms of my work being “logically speaking, unconvincing”:

“At any event, the passages Masefield examines are anything but ‘unambiguous,’ and it has to be said that his attempts to demonstrate that ‘the Dhamma consisted of sound’ or that *parato ghosa* might mean ‘the sound from the Beyond’ are suggestive but not convincing ... At the same time, this does not invalidate the rest of Masefield’s findings” (p. 259f).

“As has been pointed out, Masefield is not always entirely convincing, and often raises more questions than he answers, yet *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism* is nevertheless a book which ought to be read and thought about by all those seriously interested in the history of Buddhism, since it says something fresh and stimulating about the Pali Canon on the basis of careful, original research” (p. 264).

The reason for my failure to address his above-mentioned objection lay

partly in the fact that I felt it somewhat disingenuous to defend myself in such a brief review, and partly in a lack of philosophical acumen on my part which did not allow me to foresee that “leading scholars of demonstrated philosophical talent and Indological expertise” would conclude that I had somehow “conflated” the two terms *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* simply by my making use of the distinction, recognised by Theravādin orthodoxy since at least the fifth century AD—though still misunderstood by Western philosophers—between the two *parinibbānas* of (1) the *kilesa-parinibbāna* (defilement-*parinibbāna*) attained by an enlightened person during his lifetime; and (2) the *khandha-parinibbāna* (*khandha-parinibbāna*) attained at, or after, his death.

Being as I am only “on an isolated fringe of Buddhist Studies,” I had thought it would help the main argument of the paper (which Hoffman fails to address¹) if I were first to remind my readers that there were uses of the term *parinibbāna* and its cognates in contexts where the person concerned was neither dead nor dying, and from which it followed that such terms were not always used to denote the post-mortem state of an enlightened individual. To this end, I cited the passage in the *Dīghanikāya* in which the Buddha chastises the wanderer Nigrodha saying:

“Did this not occur to you, Nigrodha, being as you are intelligent and advanced in years: ‘Himself awoken, the Lord teaches (*deseti*) Dhamma for the sake of awakening, himself tamed, the Lord teaches (*deseti*) Dhamma for the sake of taming, himself calmed, the Lord teaches (*deseti*) Dhamma for the sake of calm, himself crossed over, the Lord teaches (*deseti*) Dhamma for the sake of crossing over, himself *parinibbuto*, the Lord teaches (*deseti*) Dhamma for the sake of *parinibbāna*?’” (D iii 54f).²

The passage then continues with Nigrodha confessing his fault:

“With this thus said, Nigrodha the wanderer said this to the Lord, ‘A fault overcame me, Lord, in that I thus spoke so foolishly, so deludedly, so unskillfully, to the Lord. May the Lord pardon that fault of mine, Lord, so that I might refrain from such faults in future’.”³

a request with which Buddha complies.

To this Hoffman (109f) objects:

“First, nothing [in the phrase *parinibbuto so Bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti* (himself *parinibbuto*, the Lord teaches Dhamma for the sake of *parinibbāna*)] guarantees the implication ‘that at the time he was neither dead nor dying’. For [*parinibbuto so Bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti*], which may be translated as ‘Completely enlightened the Blessed One teaches doctrine for enlightenment’ does not mean *in context* [my italics] that Buddha is somehow alive or teaching. It means that the doctrine is taught in the Buddha’s life. One can mean this and say that he teaches the way by example, just as one can say that Thomas More teaches the importance of conscience even if one

has no thoughts of heaven and of More's continued existence. Since the Pāli does not guarantee Masfield's implication, then one need not agree that there is 'no reason for us to suppose that the individuals in question are either dying or already dead'. On my reading, the present tense of *deseti* is being used in a way which does not imply that the Buddha is alive.'

Quite frankly, I do not know how exactly to respond this, since the context *is*, quite plainly, one recording a debate between the (still living) Buddha and the wanderer Nigrodha, as the commentary on the passage indeed confirms. To suggest that, *on his reading*, the verb *deseti* is being used here in some wholly unique way surely requires further argument, and especially when the commentary appeals to the very distinction I was reminding readers of.⁴

Hoffman, however, seemingly feeling that his objection requires no further substantiation, then proceeds to a partial, and faulty, quotation of a further passage (S iv 204) which I had cited in support of my argument (I italicise those portions omitted or misquoted by Hoffman):

"*Samāhito sampajāno sato buddhassa sāvako*
Vedanā ca pajānāti vedanānañ ca sambhavam
Yatha [for yattha] c' etā nirujjhanti maggañ ca khayagāminam
Vedanānam khayā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto ti"

followed by a truncated (mis-)quotation of Woodward's translation (KS iv 136) of same:

"They cease, and what the way to feelings' end.
That brother who hath ended them, *therefore* [for therefor]
No longer hungereth. He is set free."

and then surmises:

" 'Set free' should not be taken as free in a relative sense (from something), where what is set free can go on existing. For Buddhist *parinibbāna* is not freedom from this or that particular condition, but 'freedom' in an extended sense—freedom from all conditions. And talk of one who has eliminated pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings is not evidence that such a one is alive."

Now close attention will show that the first line in Woodward's translation is unintelligible. This is because, apparently unbeknown to Hoffman, the finite verb is to be found in the portion of the verse that he fails to quote. The *whole* verse, whose authority I cited in evidence that one could be *parinibbuta* yet still alive, may be translated as follows:

"Concentrated, attentive, mindful, the sāvaka of the Buddha understands feelings, and the origination of feelings and wherein these cease and the path leading to their destruction—that monk, through the destruction of feelings, is rid of hunger, is *parinibbuta*."

I leave it to the reader to decide whether someone who is ‘concentrated, attentive, [and] mindful’ and who ‘understands things’ is, at the same time, dead, except to say that Hoffman’s findings are again at odds with the commentary.⁵

It is an open question as to whether such misquotation is, in the present case, due to an ignorance of Pali or merely an outcome of the book’s systemic sloppiness. The fact that he chose, in his response, to dismiss my attack on one of the many Achilles heels of his work—his most peculiar derivation of *sacchikaroti* from *sacca*—merely by stating that he had “not the space, time or inclination to pursue” such things still suggests to me the former.

But I mean him no ill will. Indeed, if he is able to wrench himself from the real sanctum sanctorum of Buddhist Studies in West Chester, Pennsylvania,⁶ I cordially invite him to join me, and a few other frogs,⁷ at the next *World Sanskrit Conference*⁸ to be held at the bottom of my well,⁹ and defend either his atemporal reading of the present indicative of *deseti* or his novel derivation of *sacchikaroti* before participants in the section on Pali and Buddhist Studies, of which I am co-ordinator. However, I should warn him that bee-filled bonnets will almost certainly be *de rigueur*.

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PETER MASEFIELD

¹ “It is not necessary to trace the other arguments Masefield gives concerning Buddhaghosa ...” (Hoffman, p. 111).

² Tassa te Nigrodha viññussa sato mahallakassa na etad ahoṣi: ‘Buddho so Bhagavā bodhāya dhammaṃ deseti, danto so Bhagavā damathāya dhammaṃ deseti, santo so Bhagavā samathāya dhammaṃ deseti tiṇṇo so Bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṃ deseti, parinibbuto so Bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti.’

³ Evaṃ vutte Nigrodho paribbājako Bhagavantam etad avoca: ‘Accayo maṃ bhante accagamā yathābālaṃ yathāmūlhaṃ yathā-akusalaṃ so ‘haṃ Bhagavantam evaṃ avacāsiṃ. Tassa me bhante Bhagavā accayaṃ accayato paṭiṇaṇhātu āyatiṃ saṃvarāyā’ ti.

⁴ *Himself awoken, the Lord ... for the sake of awaking (Buddho so Bhagavā bodhāya):* awoken of his own accord, the Buddha teaches Dhamma for the sake of awakening to the four truths on the part of (other) beings too ... *Parinibbuta (parinibbuto):* parinibbuta by way of the defilement-parinibbāna. *For the sake of parinibbāna (parinibbānāya):* teaches Dhamma for the sake of parinibbāna of all defilement on the part of the people too. (Buddho so Bhagavā bodhāya ti sayam Buddho satānam pi catusaccabodhanatthāya dhammaṃ deseti ... Parinibbuto ti kilesaparinibbānena parinibbuto. Parinibbānāya ti mahājanassāpi sabakilesaparinibbānatthāya dhammaṃ deseti—DA 842).

⁵ *Concentrated (samāhito)*: concentrated by way of access or by way of absorption. *Understand feelings (vedanā ca pajānāti)*: understands feelings by way of the truth of suffering. *And the origination of feelings (vedanānañ ca sambhavaṃ)*: understands the origination of those same by way of the truth of uprising. *And wherein these (yattha c' etā)*: and wherein those feelings cease; understands that to be nibbāna by way of the truth of cessation. *Leading to their destruction (khayagāminam)*: understands the path leading to the destruction of those same feelings by way of the truth associated with the path. *Is rid of hunger, is parinibbūta (nicchāto parinibbuto)*: having become rid of craving, is parinibbūta by way of the defilement-parinibbāna. (*Samāhito* ti upacārena vā appaṇāya vā samāhito. *Vedanā ca pajānāti* ti vedanādukkhasaccavasena pajānāti. *Vedanānañ ca sambhavan* ti tāsam yeva sambhavaṃ samudayasaccavasena pajānāti. *Yattha c' etā* ti yatth' etā vedanā nirujjhanti; taṃ nibbānaṃ nirodhasaccavasena pajānāti. *Khayagāminan* ti tāsam yeva vedanānaṃ khayagāminamaggaṃ maggasaccavasena pajānāti. *Nicchāto parinibbuto* ti nittaṇṇo hutvā kilesaparinibbānena parinibbuto—SA iii 74).

⁶ I admit I have not been to West Chester, Pennsylvania. I *have* been three times overland to India, travelled 10,000 km, third class unreserved, on Indian railways, from Sikkim and Ladakh in the Himalaya to Cape Comorin in the south, lived six months in Nepal, two years in a village in Sri Lanka, and have been twice to Burma, and many times to Thailand and Indonesia, just as, holding a degree in Philosophy and Religious Studies, I have also taught at the Universities of Manchester, Durham, Edinburgh, Dunedin (New Zealand) and Sydney, organised the Sydney Congress of the IAHR and the visit of the Dalai Lama to Australia, and have, in addition my *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, translations of two commentaries already published by the Pali Text Society, with a third close to completion. But of the dizzy heights of West Chester, Pennsylvania, I can but dream.

⁷ For even frogs can become enlightened—see my translation of the *Exposition of the Frog-Devaputta's Vimāna* in *Vimāna Stories*, Pali Text Society, 1989, pp. 339ff.

⁸ In January, 1994, at Melbourne, Australia.

⁹ And from which the ocean beyond is clearly visible, as participants at the Sydney meeting of the IAHR will no doubt recall.

BOOK REVIEWS

WALTER PÖTSCHER, *Aspekte und Probleme der minoischen Religion. Ein Versuch* (Religionswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien, Band 4) Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Georg Olms Verlag 1990 (VIII + 288 p.) ISBN 3-487-09359-6, DM 98.00

The interpretation of Minoan religion is notoriously difficult: given the lack of intelligible texts, scholars rely on mainly iconographical evidence; the correct assessment of images from a foreign culture is tricky even for the specialist. Analogies from other cultures may be called in, and so may theories about early religion—but the help could prove a trap and is not well received today: it has become increasingly clear how much Arthur Evans' concept of Minoan religion owed to the Cambridge Ritualists.

Thus, a non-archaeologist who ventures into this maze may seem audacious; Professor Pötscher's book will have to brave engrained iconographists. It proceeds in three steps. Part I discusses isolated objects—the well known double axes, bull horns ("horns of consecration") and heads, trees and twigs, pillars, columns, birds and snakes (pp. 17-107). P. understands them as "Erscheinungsform" of a divinity, be it the (or a) female or the/a male god—the indecision in the articles arises from P.'s stance in the question of Minoan polytheism: it is polytheistic in a rather peculiar way, the goddess and the god being both one or several, according to the intuition of the worshiper. The concept of "Erscheinungsform" is central, and P. distinguishes it carefully from the more usual "symbol": the column does not stand for the goddess, it is one of her forms.

Part II treats combinations of these objects (pp. 109-169). Being forms of only two deities, they allow for only two meanings, a synonymous and a non-synonymous one. Synonymous combinations depict the deity in a more powerful form, non-synonymous ones have a sexual meaning (the sexual character of the objects follows from the concept of "Erscheinungsform"): they display the *hieros gamos* between goddess and god. The reasoning is stringent—on its own premises.

Part III is less uniform. Chapter 1 analyzes the Haghia Triada sarcophagus, another notorious problem (171-191). The solution is ingenious; P.'s key is to take the different background colours as indications of time—blue the night, yellow the morning, white the day; this brings the images into a ritual sequence, from a morning procession to the

epiphany of a Dying God. Chapter 3 looks back from Minoan religion to Çatal Hüyük, in the wake of Mellaart; P. contradicts only his interpretation of the women with upturned arms and legs under whom is a bull's head: where the excavator had seen births, P. again prefers intercourse. After some general remarks on Aegean connections and the relationship between Minoan and Mycenaean religion, part III closes with a chapter on the "lustral baths"; P. ingeniously explains the enigmatic lack of drains from ritual. Some general considerations on the nature of Minoan religion, its polytheism and its mythology close the book.

At least the present reader left the book with mixed feelings. Less because it is sometimes unnecessarily long-winded (e.g. the discussion about Epaphos on pp. 33-44) and because P.'s method is often woolly (blatantly so when he argues against Mellaart by invoking realism on p. 199 and denying realism as an argument against himself by taking refuge to miracles on p. 200); less even because we are altogether back in the world of Sir Arthur Evans where Minoan religion is a fertility religion, with ritual *gamoi* to guarantee the growth of plants, animals and humans, where even the Dying God is resurrected and where religion concerns only the individual whose feelings may be, as P. does at the end, illustrated with verses from Eichendorff—such a thoroughly Romantic concept of religion calls for respect (even if the present reviewer fundamentally disagrees), as does the mastering of sources and bibliography. More problematical is P.'s concept of "Erscheinungsform" which looks rather like a personal hunch than a valid theory, and whose results (an obsessive amount of *gamoi*) decidedly speak against it. P.'s assessment of Minoan polytheism is more original, though not without problems either: Minoan religion appears illogical and primitive, worlds apart from the distinctness of the other polytheistic religions of the 2nd millennium, though both P.'s valid arguments for an Aegean background as well as his final considerations on Minoan mythology try to bring it back into its surrounding world.

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JÖRG RÜPKE, *Domi militiae. Die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom.*—
Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1990 (312 p.) ISBN 3-515-05679
DM 68.—

Roman military represents one of the central factors of Roman history, perhaps even the decisive one. R(üpke)'s study investigates in the importance of war, in its position within Roman civilization, by discussing what he calls *die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges*. The question is: how did Roman society's self-esteem assimilate its wars? Thereat the transition into war, into killing and plundering, and back into peace is of extraordinary significance. To R. this is inseparably connected to the official shaping of war by means of religion.

The section considered by R. as introduction to the proper subject (13-96) proves to be too detailed, the so-called 'results'—"daß weder für die Republik noch für die Königszeit eine Kriegeskaste, sakrale Heere oder eine kriegerische Initiation der Jugend nachweisbar sind" (96)—should not surprise anybody. Yet important and stimulating remarks are to be found, for example on *pomerium*, *auspicium*, *dilectus* or *sacramentum*. These passages are the more profitable as R. supplies extensive lists of sources and bibliographical data. However, as far as the bibliographies in footnotes are concerned, he offers sometimes more than is useful. This can be traced back to the possibility of referring to a computerised collection of sources and bibliographical data. In some footnotes this produces catalogues of 30 to 50 items (30 Anm. 10, 76 Anm. 114, 97 Anm. 1, 223 Anm. 49) that are not very valuable if, for example, concerning the notion *sacramentum*, the two-volume edition 'Römische Forschungen' of Mommsen is cited (76). Another time (174) the author deals with the role of the *principales* in the cult of the army and cites a book of mine with the comment: "umfassend zu den *principales* CLAUSS 1973". Complimentary indeed, but my book doesn't treat all the *principales* together, but only three ranks. The bibliography, followed by an index of subjects and an index of authors, contains about 1.000 items.

In the central part of the book (II-IV) R. follows the course of a war expedition with preparation, realization and close of a military campaign: *Roma bellans*, *altera Roma* and *Roma victrix*. His exposition is exceedingly rich in detail; I can only single out some aspects. Within the single sections chronology sets the frame as well. R. starts his considerations about the preparations of a military expedition with the section *bellum iubeo et indico* with an analysis of the right of the *fetiales* and their corporation. One can register important developments since the end of the 3. century B.C., when the functions of the *fetiales* were modified and enlarged. These

measures aimed at increasing the senate's power to control members of the nobility, a phenomenon remarkable in many fields of the political life of the time. By now the *fetiales* became priests of *Iupiter Feretrius*. At the end of that century the Romans simultaneously began to consider their single military expeditions as 'war'. The impulse came from the first Roman-Carthagan war, the single battles of which were interpreted in retrospective as stages towards the final victory. The remaining sections of this chapter deal with the following topics: *paludatus Roma profectus est*, *Roma in itinere* and *pugna*. The latter section dedicates considerable length to the description of the *devotio*. The ritual is a product of the inventive annalist tradition. This tradition is however not without historic interest as it displays the significance of such a literary product in a society in which historiography forms a first-rate source of norms.

The chapter *altera Roma* (III)—a formulation of Livy (44, 39, 4) gave the impulse to the heading—contains the sections *castra*, *religio castrensis* and *religio militum*. R. unfolds mostly well known informations about the *Feriale Duranum*, the *signa* and the wide spread cult of the *genii* (an example for the *genius vexillationis* that R. misses is given by the inscription CIL 13, 7943). The last chapter of the central part (IV) deals with the subjects *pugna confecta*, *bellum confectum* and *reditus in urbem*. Whereas the *spolia opima* is treated too extensively, the study about the triumph offers a profound analysis of the most important of all rites ending the war. Here, as in all the essential parts of his work R. is successful in combining methods of religious and social history. The development one can observe regarding the triumph is representative for a lot of further phenomenons. The 'theological' presuppositions of a triumph, established by the state in the time of the republic, vanish gradually. As a result of the increasing power of individual politicians and generals the triumph is no longer the shortlived climax in the career of a magistrate but develops importance of its own. In the course of this evolution is the monopoly of the emperor and the end leaves the emperor as perpetual victor, who is capable to celebrate each of his appearances as a 'triumph'.

R.'s attempt to discuss the religious background of all the circumstances in connection with war is to welcome even if, at some time or other, he oversteps the mark. This I register by his interpretation of the plan and execution of Roman streets as "petrifierte Form des auguralen Blicks auf den Horizont" (53/54). An extensive conclusion (235-264) ends the excellent study. I cannot agree with R.'s view of the early Roman republic, which I therefore left aside in this short review. Besides I disagree with his method applied to annalist authors. R.'s hypothesis is to give 'authenticity' preference to 'annalist fiction' because

this hypothesis may be falsified whilst the contrary may not. By far more important and elaborately treated is the time of the 'historic' republic beginning with the 3. century; the study extends to the 2. century A.D. For the historic republic the author's statement is valid: "Römische Religion konstruiert Krieg als eine rein staatliche Aktivität" (247); besides war is understood as a regular constituent of political action. The general is the personification of this policy. Therefore the results concerning the religious concomitant symptoms of military activity correspond with the universal political development. Consequently contest within the nobility determines the shaping of religious components. Since the end of the second Roman-Carthagan war the Roman senate interferes in this development to gain control over the magistrates and pro-magistrates who act increasingly remote from Rome; to this process belong the *fetiales*. Since then Senate and *gentes* likewise refer to allegedly historic precedents. During this evolution the position of the general, who more and more becomes the representative of the war, is stressed, a process increasing and expediting with the beginning of the Empire.

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BRIAN E. DALEY, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*—Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press 1991 (xiv + 300 p.) ISBN 0-521-35258-4 £30.00 (hardback)

Eschatology, religious teachings about last things, has occupied a more or less central place throughout the development of Christian doctrine. The discussion typically vacillates, however, on issues of the nearness or remoteness of these last things, and whether they will occur within history or constitute historical signs of a post- or hyper-historical reality. Brian Daley has compiled a "historically ordered handbook on [this] one aspect of early Christian thought" (xii) from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers in the second century through those of Gregory the Great in the sixth, the formative patristic period of doctrinal history.

Daley assembles his survey of Christian eschatological thought without much reference to the cultural and social contexts in which it was pro-

duced and operated, a restriction that he acknowledges and accepts (xii). His recognition of cultural context is limited to the conventional correlation of apocalyptic thought with times of socio-political upheaval and the recession of eschatological concern to times of relative stability (e.g., 7-9, 76, 101, 120, 124, 168, 205). And, despite the wealth of scholarship on the social life of the early Christianities that has appeared over the last decade, Daley repeats the romanticized view, first formulated by Christianity's critics in the patristic age itself (e.g., Min. Fel. 5.4, 8.4), that the social base of the Christian Church seems to have been uneducated "ordinary" people (33) rather than the more representative demographic distribution that is increasingly being identified by historians.

Although Daley includes the less familiar Syriac, Coptic and Armenian materials in his theological history along with the Latin and Greek sources, he limits his survey of the "whole development of ancient Christian eschatological hope" (xi) to that of "orthodox Christian doctrine" (216). Thus, discussion of the eschatological positions of such "heretical" thinkers as Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, and those represented by the Nag Hammadi corpus are confined to a short synopsis of gnostic views (25-8); and Mani is not even mentioned. It is regrettable that Daley does not attend more to situating patristic eschatological images and ideas even in their intellectual contexts, since this brief but insightful section on gnosticism allows the author to illuminate the emphases by Irenaeus and Tertullian on bodily resurrection, for example, from the context of their polemics against the docetic Christology of gnostic thought. And, Daley's focus on thought over practice allows him to neglect the sort of material evidence for early Christian cultures collected, for example, by Graydon F. Snyder (*Ante Pacem, Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine*, Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), which suggests that many pre-Constantinian Christians—those in Rome, for example—did not hold eschatology to be central at all, at least not any eschatological position surveyed by Daley.

Daley's understanding of eschatology is finally less historical than doctrinal, an "attempt to foresee the fulfillment of creation's purpose" (2). When eschatological discourse is defined and framed from a doctrinal perspective, however, it comes perilously close to being transformed into a determinate view of the future, negating, thereby, the very point of temporal possibility made by this discourse (thus, 220, 224). Yet, Daley's survey of this single idea from the patristic period does document the richness of religious data from this period which has yet to be mined by historians of religion—the works of Peter Brown remaining a notable

exception. Perhaps Daley, with his evident mastery of this complex material, might be persuaded to embark on such a study?

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ADALBERT DE VOGÜÉ, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité. Première partie: Le monachisme latin de la mort d'Antoine à la fin du séjour de Jérôme à Rome (356-385)* (Collection Patrimoines)—Paris: le Cerf 1991 (448 p.) ISBN 2-204-04214-5 FF 250.00.

After more than three decades of intensive study on a large array of problems in the history of western monasticism, and in particular of research on its classical sources, Dom de Vogüé has embarked upon a very ambitious project. He intends to retrace the early steps of the movement in its self-perception and self-definition (although he himself is too much of a classicist to use such terms) through a close reading of its main literary documents. The result is a magisterial lesson, which will become imperative reading for anyone in the field.

De Vogüé starts by acknowledging his intellectual debts and the great tradition which he intends to follow. An *histoire littéraire*, he states rightly, differs from both a *Geschichte der Literatur* and from history *tout court*.

The value of De Vogüé's method is directly related to his deep, intimate knowledge of the texts. This knowledge, which commands great respect, entitles him to draw—although he denies doing so—important conclusions from the texts to the reality which lies behind them. As de Vogüé states in his introduction, his interest in monasticism is existential before it is scientific. His results show that the former only strengthens the latter. Through such a close reading of texts, he is able to perceive even slight semantic changes and call attention to the turning points in the early history of the movement, or rather of the self-perception of monks in antiquity.

There is, however, a problem with this method, and it should be recognized and spelled out from the outset. The problem lies precisely with the very authority conveyed by de Vogüé's voice. It is his voice, yet it claims to reproduce the essence of monasticism itself, as it is reflected in fourth century literature. Since de Vogüé's is as elegant as it is sound, it seduces us easily; in other words, his work is itself a piece of literature. But the

fact that de Vogüé has chosen to illuminate his texts mainly by other texts, with few references to works of modern scholarship, prevents readers not as well read as he is (and few are) to check the author's views for herself or himself. Footnotes are not only a pedantic business. They do provide guidelines as to the originality of claims, and some sense as to their soundness. I may give here at least one example. The author notes that from Antony to Jerome, monastic literature seems to get rid of the devil (p. 280). This is an extremely important insight. The lack of any further discussion, however, leaves the reader somewhat frustrated.

I wish now to mention a few topics dealt with by de Vogüé which might be of special interest to historians of religion.

The book focuses on the first literary documents of western monasticism, the two Latin translations of Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*, done within less than twenty years after it was written, in 356-357, and on Jerome's *Epistles*, in particular his *Letter to Eustochium* on virginity and its three 'male' excursus. Hence the first topic of interest is perhaps the taxonomy of monasticism as perceived within a generation that saw the transformation of the movement from eremitism to coenobitism, and the 'recuperation' of the former by the latter. De Vogüé is also sensitive to other sides of the ancient taxonomy. For instance, he dwells upon the tensions between urban clergy and the monks, or more broadly between "le christianisme mondain" and those religious radicals who not only populated the desert, but also conducted their ascetic fight at the borders of heterodoxy. The status of the monks was then ambiguous, as the author shows. The monks were not only admirable models of sanctity, living *exempla*, but also, more often than not, elicited instinctive repulsion on the side of many Christians. What was true of monks could also be said about nuns. De Vogüé follows step by step the traces of the transformation, under the direct influence of the monks, of the consecrated virgins into nuns. He also points out the deep differences between Syrian and Egyptian monasticism: when the former is characterized by compunction, texts from the latter reflect the deep joy of life in Christ.

De Vogüé is able to point out the close connections of the ascetic movement not only with heterodoxy (see the numerous accusations of 'Manichaeism' thrown at the monks) but also with religious radical conservatism, what would today be called 'intégrisme' (p. 204). This insight is of great interest for a phenomenology of monasticism (for which see already A. Guillaumont's works). One wishes the author had added a word on what one could call, to use another anachronistic word, the monks' 'fundamentalism', or simplistic beliefs, reflected for instance in the anthropomorphic conceptions common among Egyptian monks.

When dealing with monastic life as it is reflected in the literature, the author is able to make various insightful comments, including on realia: food habits, dress ('l'habit fait le moine', p. 403), living quarters, culture, sexual obsessions or the lack thereof. For him the essence of monasticism, beyond obvious asceticism, is the interiorization of Paul's 'prophetic message' (p. 65). Indeed, he shows throughout the book how deeply the early monks were concerned with psychological matters: conversion, moral progress, prayer. This insistence on interior life is, to my mind, what makes early Christian monasticism fascinating, and so fundamentally different from its Essene 'model'. De Vogüé has given us a magnificent introduction into the world of the early monks. We eagerly await coming volumes.

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GABRIELE ZELLER, *Die vedischen Zwillingsgötter: Untersuchungen zur Genese ihres Kultes*. (Freiburger Beiträge zur Indologie, Bd. 24) Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990 (X, 209 p.) ISBN 3-447-03066-0 DM 64.—

Since the monograph by L. Myriantheus on the Ásvins in 1876 more than a century has passed. Many of his ideas reflect the scientific conceptions of his time and are nowadays outdated. In the course of time, various detail studies on the Ásvins have been published, but a new monograph, in which these opinions are evaluated and incorporated, was lacking. Gabriele Zeller fills this need with her thesis on the Vedic twin-gods. She tries to find a plausible and balanced explanation for the various features of the Ásvins, many of which are often regarded as alien. In this context she introduces her thesis that the worship of these Vedic twin-gods originates in a world-wide cult of twin-gods. For this reason she takes notions related to the so-called universal twinship complex of ethnology—especially the cult of the twin-gods in the indo-european cultures—as a starting point and a point of reference for her study. The idea that twins are regarded as very special beings, whose conception also involves a divine being, is according to her of central importance in this cult.

After a survey of the statistical material of the Ásvins in the Ṛgveda and a summary of Indian as well as Western interpretations (ch. 1), she

arranges the abundance of Vedic material in two main parts. In the first part she deals with the human features of the Aśvins (ch. 2-3), and in the second one with their divine ones (ch. 4). The concluding part describes the relations between the Aśvins and animals (ch. 5) and also the place and function of the Aśvins in the context of ritual (ch. 6). In this last chapter the *sautramaṇi* ritual is analysed and interpreted in connection with its related myths, dealing with Indra who is healed by the Aśvins.

Zeller's starting-point implies that she searches in the Vedic material for those facts which support her ethnological thesis of the so-called world-wide twin cult, but it is sometimes (highly) questionable whether she offers an adequate analysis and interpretation of the Vedic material. A few examples may suffice. In RV. 10.17.1-2 mention is made of the birth of the Aśvins by Saraṇyū, the daughter of Tvaṣṭar, as their mother. The two stanzas contain references to well-known ancient myths (*itihāsa* literature) and have the form of a riddle (*brahmodya*)¹. This riddle is related in the context of the funeral hymns which refer to the funeral cult. It seems to me that this "Sitz im Leben" is of central importance for the interpretation. One of the first questions should therefore be: For what reason are the story of Saraṇyū's marriage with Vivasvat and the subsequent birth of Yama (and implicitly Yamī) and of the Aśvins related in the form of a riddle in the context of the funeral rites, and for what reason are the Aśvins mentioned at all? The riddle implicitly refers to themes as the origin of human life and death and to sexuality. Within the context of these notions of creation the Aśvins are introduced and should be explained. Zeller, however, after a long analysis of the relevant material, disregards these cosmogonic notions (already mentioned by Bloomfield) and confines herself to the conclusion that the Aśvins are twins and have a common mother.

The riddle of RV. 10.17.1-2 suggests that Vivasvat is the father of the Aśvins; this seems to be confirmed by other *itihāsa* traditions. However, this view does not fit very well with the universal twin-cult theory, according to which twins should be attributed to a double impregnation, viz. by a human and a divine father. For this reason Zeller looks for support in other texts and puts RV. 1.184.4 and 5.73.4cd on the stage. The interpretation of the first stanza is highly problematic and Zeller's contention that in this context two fathers are mentioned is not very convincing, to say the least, as the name Sumakha also might be a name of Vivasvat. Moreover, the translation by Zeller of the expression *ihéha jātā* as "hier und dort gezeugt" is rather far-fetched and more in agreement with her theory than the exact meaning of the term: "born here and there". The translation and interpretation of RV. 5.73.4cd—*nānā jātāu*: "nachein-

ander gezeugt", instead of "born at different places"—is equally unconvincing. In my opinion there are no clear arguments with reference to the Vedic texts to introduce the idea of a double impregnation for the Áśvins. The author could have reinforced her arguments by showing that the idea of a double impregnation in the case of twins was well known in many ancient Indian texts, but this is not the case, as she herself admits. Moreover, even if some obscure texts would have corroborated her opinion, one should still ask oneself how these texts should be evaluated.

By following a general ethnological theory, the author has sometimes put the texts on the bed of Procrustus, instead of applying a careful form- and traditio-historical analysis and interpretation. Notwithstanding these and other objections, the book contains many useful analyses and interpretations of relevant texts. As such it is, for the time being, indispensable for the study of the Áśvins.

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¹ For a careful analysis of this riddle see M. Bloomfield, "The Marriage of Saranyū, Tvaṣṭar's daughter", in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 15, 1893, pp. 172-188.

ROQUE MESQUITA, *Yāmūnācāryas Philosophie der Erkenntnis. Eine Studie zu seiner Saṃvitsiddhi*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1990 (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 563. Band. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Südasien Nr. 24,) (314 p.) ISBN 3-7001-1780-9 DM 70.00

This book continues Mesquita's investigations of the philosophy of Yāmuna, and in particular forms a pair with his edition of the *Saṃvitsiddhi* (SS).¹ The earlier book contained a painstaking critical edition and a faithful annotated translation of the SS, and a reconstruction of the lost sections; in the present study the breadth of Mesquita's work is widened greatly. The SS is now taken as the starting point for a penetrating analysis of Yāmuna's thought, with particular emphasis on his epistemology. For Yāmuna's teachings on perception, which must have

been discussed in parts of the SS which are now lost, recourse was taken to another work of his, the *Āgamaprāmaṇya*.

There can be no doubt of the value and importance of Mesquita's work, which should certainly be read by all serious students of Indian philosophy and religion. The principal merit of this book is the most impressive way in which Yāmuna's thought is placed in a broader context, not only of Rāmānuja and other Viśiṣṭādvaitic writings, but also of the polemics with other major schools. There is a certain amount of overlap with material found in the annotation to Mesquita's earlier book (Mesquita 1988; see n. 1), but this is of course readily understandable,² and there is much here which will be new to most readers. One section to which attention might be drawn in particular is the concluding part of the book, on Yāmuna's theories of error (p. 234-279). Yāmuna rejects the *anirvacanīyakhyaṭi* theory of Vimuktātman, according to which erroneous cognition and the erroneously supposed object are neither really existent nor non-existent, in a sort of ontological no man's land, and propounds two different, but to some extent complementary, theories of error: respectively that of *anyathākhyāti* and *yathārthākhyāti*.³ The *yathārthākhyāti* theory, which maintains that all cognition is in conformity with some object in the real world (*yathārthaṃ sarvavijñānam*), is treated extensively on the basis of the presentation and translation of the relevant part of Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya*: very welcome here is the discussion of the *sarvasarvātmakavāda* referred to by Rāmānuja immediately at the beginning of the passage (*śrutismṛtibhyaḥ sarvasya sarvātmavapratītiḥ*// p. 249 l. 22), which supplements the studies of this theory already published by A. Wezler.

The translations are generally fairly accurate, though there are a few passages where Mesquita seems to be slightly off the mark. The slips are usually relatively unimportant; e.g. on p. 140 l. 29 Mesquita's translation of the sentence *bhedagrahaṇenaiva hy abhedanivṛttiḥ* wrongly takes the particle *eva* with *abhedanivṛttiḥ* rather than with *bhedagrahaṇena*: 'Denn auf Grund des Erfassens der Unterschiedlichkeit hört eben die Nichtunterschiedlichkeit auf;' correct would be 'Denn nur auf Grund ...' (omitting 'eben').

The book has been produced to the usual standard of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, but the number of misprints in Sanskrit words and texts must be said to be considerably greater than what one normally expects and regards as inevitable. There are too many to list here, but here are a few which I have noticed that could be misleading. P. 36 l. 6: in the second pāda of the quotation from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* read *kiṃpramāṇakah* (a compound!) for *kiṃ pramāṇakah*. P. 120 n. 300: in the second pāda of the quotation from

Sureśvara's *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika* (BUBhV) read *vaidikaṃ* for *vadikaṃ*. P. 123 l. 10 from bottom: read *nyāyavidbhir* for *nyāyavadbhir*. P. 124 n. 314: in the next to the last line of the quotation from the BUBhV read *aśeṣeṣu* for *aśeṣu*: the last line is also obviously garbled (and unmetrical) but I have not been able to check what the correct reading should be. P. 210 l. 8: in the first pāda of the verse quoted from Yāmuna's *Catuṣślokī* one should probably read *yad brahmarūpaṃ* for *yadbrahma rūpaṃ*; the translation should then also be adjusted slightly. P. 250 l. 1: read *prthivyāś cety* for *prthvyāś ca 'ity*.

Mesquita deserves our thanks and congratulations for yet another piece of sound scholarship on Yāmuna.

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¹ R. Mesquita: *Yāmunačārya's Samvitsiddhi. Kritische Edition, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen. Mit einem Rekonstruktionsversuch der verlorenen Abschnitte*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 504. Band. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Südasien Nr. 21. Reviewed by D. Shulman in *NUMEN* xxxvii.1 (1990), 132-134, and by John Taber in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110.4 (1990), 738-740.

² It is somewhat less easy to understand the necessity of repetitions within the book itself such as the presence of text and translation of SS 392-395 (note that Mesquita's numbering of the SS is on the basis of half-verses rather than complete ślokaś) on both p. 139 and p. 328.

³ The surviving parts of the SS do not actually put forth the *yathārthakhyāti*, but Mesquita has convincingly argued that Yāmuna must have upheld it (Mesquita 1988, 63-66).

DOUGLAS RENFREW BROOKS, *The Secret of the Three Cities. An Introduction to Hindu Śākta Tantrism* — Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1990 (xx + 307 p., 13 diagrams) ISBN 0-226-07570-2 (paper) \$21.75

The Secret of the Three Cities will be welcome to anyone interested in the special significance of South Indian Tantrism. The major importance of the book for such a person occurs in Part II, in Brooks's rendering of Bhāskararāya's commentary on the (Tantric) *Tripurā Upaniṣad* (pp. 149-

190). Bhāskararāya (18th century A.D.) is probably still not widely studied by experts on the subject of Śāktism and Tantrism, and he may not be classifiable among the great Hindu thinkers, but no doubt his written works have made him the most generally recognized authority among South Indian Śrīvidyā devotees.

Worthy of note is the author's purposeful translation of the *Triṣpurā Upaniṣa* in accordance with Bhāskararāya's interpretation. The book does not give us the Sanskrit text of Bhāskararāya's commentary, but the lines of the Upaniṣad are printed in transliteration. Regarding the commentary, the text is based on Brooks's analysis of several manuscripts, as he explains (pp. 143-147). The meaning of his analysis, however, is not a matter of expert collation, but serves rather to establish the structure of the entire modern tradition that recognizes Bhāskararāya's authority. Given the perishable writing materials in India, the significance of "critical" editions is generally limited, and, in the case of a text of barely two hundred years of age, quite limited. Brooks's own description of the versions he used (pp. 146-147) makes clear that no serious amount of philological expertise was required, and the "emendations" he brings in do not change the text in any significant way from the existing printed editions. Brooks promises "tremendous insight into the modern interpretation of the work" as a result of the "produced few alterations" (p. 147), but the peruser of the book does not notice such a result in any of the instances listed. An occasional "emendation" seems to be inspired by personal taste; thus, in one instance, on p. 261, fn. 185, that at first glance makes sense by making the specific text more systematic, a change from *sūtra-* to *sūkta-* is advocated; on the other hand, in the compound of which it is a part, the word *sūtra-* can very well have a general meaning—"texts"—and certainly can represent a plural; in any event, some remark on Bhāskararāya's use of the term throughout his writings would be in order to justify the change.

Part I of the book comprises the largest section, and Professor Brooks certainly succeeds in conveying his enthusiasm for Bhāskararāya's importance to his readers. The bow to his *guru*, who, in good Tantric tradition, is not mentioned by name, is visible on the dedication page, and prepares one for meeting an initiate. His stated purpose, however, is more encompassing than to speak esoterically. He sets out to demonstrate that "Goddess-centered or Śākta Tantric traditions are essential for understanding Hinduism" (p. ix). Although in his bibliography he lists Eliade's work on *yoga*, which more than superficially touched on that very subject, he does not deal with Eliade's ideas in the course of his work, nor with several others who could have rendered help to him. (For example, he

neither makes use of or mentions Renou and Filliozat's *L'Inde Classique*, nor Jean Varenne.) Professor Brooks raises yet higher expectations in his Preface; he wants to see his work as "a textbook that makes an initial purchase on the subject of Śākta Tantrism and engages the reader as an interpreter in the broader comparative study of religion" (p. x).

It seems to me that the author indeed deals with questions of some scope, such as the relationship between the Tantric tradition and artistic expression. (He is familiar with the work of Stella Kramrisch, but seemingly not with A. K. Coomaraswamy.) His subject of course leads him into the problem of the relationships between Tantric and Vedic tradition, and he is aware of the fluidity of the line dividing them (see pp. 26-27), even if one would have liked to see here more reflection on the existing scholarly literature. He has engaging things to say in various places of his book on the social and religious realities meeting in Tantric tradition, but they do not make clear why and how we should pay more attention to the former. A passing reference to Max Weber (p. 131) is not enough, especially since the crucial ideas of Weber on what it means to understand (precisely with respect to the relation of those two realities) are not even mentioned. One would hope that Professor Brooks will return to Tantrism, his area of expertise, and deal at greater depth with the large questions that intrigue him.

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ANIL SOOKLAL, *Children of Immortality. The Ramakrishna Movement with Special Emphasis on the South African Context*. Red Hill, South Africa: The Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa 1990 (XIII + 387 p., 13 appendices, bibliography) ISBN 0 908417 21 7

This book is of interest to students of Neo-Hinduism, and of the history of Hinduism in its diaspora, particularly in Africa.

The Republic of South Africa has the second largest Hindu community outside India, a legacy of the movement of cheap Indian labour, entrepreneurs and trained professionals within the British Commonwealth in the past. The study of Hinduism in Africa is mainly undertaken by the Dpt. of Hindu Studies and that of the Science of Religion in the University of Durban-Westville. Dr. Anil Sookal is a Hindu

academic and a staff member of that Dpt. of Hindu Studies. In 1986, he also published *A socio-religious study of the Hare Krishna movement in South Africa*.

This book is based on Sookal's D.Phil. thesis in the University of Durban-Westville in 1988. The history of the most important of the Neo-Hindu movements of the 19th century, the Ramakrishna Mission, as organised and spread by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)'s intellectual disciple, Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath Dutta, 1863-1902), is studied in it as it developed in India and spread to South Africa. Chapter two is devoted to "Renascent Hinduism" and the place of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in it. Chapter three details the Neo-Vedanta, or Neo-Advaita, philosophy of Vivekananda, and in chapter four, the development of the Ramakrishna Mission in India is outlined, both after its religious and humanitarian aspects. In chapter five, six, and seven, the history of the Ramakrishna Movement in South Africa since its foundation there in 1942, its Neo-Advaita "religio-philosophical framework" and its departments of service are discussed. In South Africa, it has grown considerably since 1965 and become a major influence among the Hindus of South Africa by its "reformist" tradition of combining religious instruction with social service to a diaspora community.

In chapter one, the author suggests that Vivekananda's Neo-Vedanta/Advaita philosophy of religion is "the main hermeneutical key to the understanding of the Ramakrishna Movement." It is, he says, "the bedrock upon which the entire superstructure of the Movement rests". This emphasis on religious doctrine is in line with the methodological position taken by Sookal. He is aware of "the vigorous, if not always rigorous debate about methodology" which is presently afoot in the study of religion. In that debate, he opts for the phenomenological position, seeking "to describe and understand the nature of some aspects of Neo-Hinduism as reflected in the Ramakrishna Movement, rather than to merely explain them." The words "rather" and "merely" express Sookal's disapproval of recent approaches in the study of religions, which in addition to accurate description seek to derive limited explanations of particular religions and religious phenomena from the study of their settings and the functions they have in it. Sookal follows Ursula King (in Whaling's *Contemporary approaches to the study of religion*, vol. 1) and particularly the Indian Jesuit Dhavamony's 1973 *Phenomenology of Religion* (Rome: The Gregorian University Press). He distinguishes between a descriptive, an interpretative and an hermeneutical phenomenology, of which the first is "more empirically grounded in the examination of data," the second "seeks to grasp a deeper meaning of religious

phenomena,” and the third studies these phenomena “in their historical context as well as in their structural connections”. Following Dhavamony, he makes the curious distinction between the philosophical and the empirical essence sought after in the eidetic vision in phenomenology. The latter is, he says, “the inner meaning of a religious phenomenon as it is lived and experienced by religious men.” Seeking after this empirical essence, “phenomenology of religion is an empirical science,” Sookal concludes.

Within the limits set by this religionist approach eschewing explanation, Sookal has contributed an interesting study of the development of Hinduism in South Africa.

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EDWIN BERNBAUM, *Sacred Mountains of the World*—San Francisco: Sierra Book Club 1990 (XXVII, 291 p., map, illus.) ISBN 0-87156-712-1
\$ 50

The author of *Sacred Mountains*, first introduced to the mystery of mountains and mountain climbing as a child growing up at the foot of the Andes, later spent several decades traveling the world exploring the physical sites and symbolic aspects of peaks sacred and profane, in a rare combination of alpinist and scholar. The result is a unique book incorporating natural history with the history of religions, relying on the author's own climbing experiences and field work among religious pilgrims to sacred mountains, but also drawing on the classic accounts of ascents and publications on sacred mountains. This handsomely crafted volume is lavishly illustrated with the author's and others' color photos, enabling the reader to appreciate visually as well as grasp conceptually the phenomenon of holy peaks. Bernbaum goes beyond description and interpretation to praise the object of his devotion and recommend it to us as worthy of our attention and even admiration.

The book has two divisions: Part I, *Sacred Mountains Around the World*, featuring eleven chapters on sacred mountains of different major regions, starting with chapters on the Himalayas, China, Central Asia, and Japan, and ending with chapters on North America, Latin America, and Oceania; Part II, *The Power and Mystery of Mountains*, including four chapters summing up the symbolism of sacred mountains, their role

in literature and art, the spiritual dimensions of mountaineering, and the relevance of sacred mountains for everyday life. Bernbaum realizes that he can only give highlights of the sacred mountains in each region, focusing on famous and important examples, but does a masterly job in his selection, in the process providing helpful tips to novices.

On such instance is the Himalayas: he examines the relatively recent worldwide fascination with Everest, the highest of all mountains, but notes that Everest is not that significant for the people living nearby: Mount Kailas “stands out above all others as the ultimate sacred mountain for more than half a billion people in India, Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan” (p. 8). In each of the areas surveyed he is sensitive to both local and historical differences, and variations in religious practice and artistic expression. Neither height alone nor mere appearance determines the cultural perception of a sacred mountain, and the same physical form can support a host of images and practices, as in the noted case of Adam’s Peak in Sri Lanka—holy not only to Muslims and Christians but also to Hindus and Buddhists.

After providing a brief but perceptive tour through the sacred mountains of eleven world regions, Bernbaum attempts the nigh impossible feat of preserving the distinctiveness of each example while maintaining that there is something common to all sacred mountains. He rejects two extreme interpretations of sacred mountains: first, that they are “a jumble of unrelated visions,” and second, reducing them all to “variations on a single, universal archetype—most notably the idea of the mountain as a cosmic axis that stands at the center of the universe” (p. 206). While acknowledging the contribution of Eliade, and recognizing that the perception of sacred mountains as center “is one of the most widespread and powerful of all the views we have encountered,” (p. 208) he resists the temptation to force all mountains into this conception. He resolves the scholarly argument by concluding that “The reality revealed by a mountain is what is universal, not any particular view of it” (p. 206). However, his closing remarks advocate both “the spiritual dimensions of mountaineering” and the personal and ecological benefits of appreciating sacred mountains. “The sense of the sacred awakened by mountains reveals a reality that has the power to transform our lives,” and “The reality revealed by a mountain can be experienced anywhere” (pp. 255, 256). This is his hope, and the reviewer, who has climbed and studied some of the sacred mountains mentioned in the book, can appreciate the view from which this hope emerges.

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WOUTER W. BELIER, *Decayed Gods. Origin & Development of Georges Dumézil's 'Idéologie Tripartite'*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1991 (xv + 254 p.) ISBN 9004094873 \$61.54

Dumézil's tripartite theory of Indo-European society has excited strong support as well as outright hostility in the field of Indo-European studies. After his first book, *Le festin d'immortalité* (1924), Dumézil's work is almost exclusively devoted to the development and refinement of his tripartite theory. The theory hinges on the supposed correspondence of the social order of Indo-European society and the structure of the pantheon. Dumézil does not examine the social organization of Indo-European societies systematically. Instead, he focusses on religion, more specifically the mythologies of these peoples. In an impressive list of publications he tries to demonstrate the validity and the explanatory value of his theory. Many readers who disagree with the basic tenets of Dumézil's theory tend to find his arguments repetitive and are not inclined to attach much importance to the development and further refinements of the theory. In a thorough study of Dumézil's theory Belier demonstrates that it is not as static and monolithic as is often thought. Examining the consistencies and inconsistencies in this theory, Belier gives a wealth of quotations (not translated) illustrating the diversity of Dumézil's arguments. In the long run Dumézil's thought appears to be less consistent and systematic than often portrayed by some of his adherents. The book gives an excellent survey of Dumézil's work. But Belier's book has also certain limitations. No attention is paid to the academic and cultural context of Dumézil's studies. Here I do not refer to an examination of Dumézil's political opinions which have become the subject of some controversy. The accusation that Dumézil's tripartite theory reflected a right-wing or even a pseudo-fascist conception of society (as raised by some critics) seems to me hasty and unjustified, and does not deserve much discussion. More problematic is the neglect of the relations between Dumézil and his predecessors and colleagues. The author focussed on the work of Dumézil as an individual. The publications of Mauss and the Année Sociologique group, of Lévy-Bruhl, Granet, and others with regard to the relation between religion and society were highly relevant to the origin and development of Dumézil's work, but they are not discussed. Belier's rejection of Lévi-Strauss' assessment of Dumézil as a structuralist is too facile. The reception of Dumézil's work might also have received more attention. What made Dumézil's exercise such an impact on Indo-European studies? Obviously the author had to limit himself, but consequently the evaluation of Dumézil's work is not wholly satisfactory. A full assessment of the 'scientific value' of

Dumézil's work requires more than the application of the principles of falsification and verification which are introduced in the final section. Nevertheless, the book gives a good introduction to Dumézil's work and it should be studied carefully by anyone interested in Dumézil's tripartite theory.

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Kurt Rudolph

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